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THE HINDU

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BENGALURU
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I will continue to support right causes of Congress, says Sibal
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Fire sparks blast at port depot in Bangladesh killing 49 people
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Nadal wins 14th French Open crown and 22nd Grand Slam title
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NEARBY

Students worry as PU admissions close

BENGALURU

Even before Class X students of Central board schools, like those affiliated to CBSE and ICSE, get their exam results, many private PU colleges have closed I PU admissions, breaking the DPUE rules.

BENGALURU ▸ PAGE 2

Hindutva groups want installations altered

BENGALURU

Bajrang Dal members led a bike rally to Vidurashwatha on the occasion of V.D. Savarkar's birth anniversary recently. Though Suryanarayana Rao, national co-convener of the Bajrang Dal, insisted that the rally had nothing to do with the campaign by right-wing groups demanding "correction" of some installations, he said the freedom struggle gallery at the monument was "misleading."

BENGALURU ▸ PAGE 5

RS polls: Guessing game continues for fourth seat

BENGALURU

With the brain-racking calculations over the numbers involved for the fourth Rajya Sabha seat from Karnataka, the race seems to have become intense and interesting.

KARNATAKA ▸ PAGE 6

EDUCATIONPLUS ▸ PAGE 4 & 5

Amid global outrage, BJP acts against leaders for hate remarks

The party suspends Nupur Sharma, Naveen Kumar for communal comments

NISTULA HEBBAR
SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday suspended its spokesperson Nupur Sharma and the media cell head of its Delhi unit, Naveen Kumar, from the primary membership of the party following objectionable and communal statements made by them on Prophet Muhammed and Islam.

The disciplinary action comes amid a diplomatic outrage, especially in West Asian nations. Qatar's foreign office summoned Indian envoy Deepak Mittal, while Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu is on an official visit there. Social media was flooded with protests, with a call to boycott Indian products in the Gulf countries.

On Friday, violence broke out in Kanpur over the remarks made by the BJP leaders.

An official statement by the External Affairs Ministry said that Mr. Mittal "conveyed [to Qatari authorities] that the tweets do not, in any manner, reflect the views of the Government of India. These are the views of fringe elements... strong action has already been taken against them."

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 10

West Asian nations demand public apology from Indian govt.

SUHASINI HAIDAR
KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

The government on Sunday faced a growing diplomatic storm over comments made by two suspended BJP leaders, as countries in the Gulf region summoned Ambassadors and conveyed their concern about growing "extremism and hatred" the comments signified.

Qatar and Kuwait summoned India's Ambassadors in Doha and Kuwait City, respectively, and demanded a "public apology" from New Delhi for the comments that were considered "Islamophobic", as did Iran. A number of other Arab nations are understood to have informally conveyed their concerns over the comments to India. The controversy erupted even as Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu began his visit to Doha, part of a three-nation tour. The Iranian protest came three days before the Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian is due to make his first visit to Delhi.

Meanwhile, the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation also issued a "strong condemnation" of what it called "abuses by an official of the ruling party of India (BJP)", linking the comments to previous decisions to ban the hijab at educational institutions in certain Indian States, violence against minorities, and demolitions of their property.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called the comments "hurtful", and accused the Modi government of "trampling [on] religious freedoms and persecuting Muslims".

The Indian Embassy in Doha and Kuwait subsequently issued statements clarifying that the comments "did not reflect the views of the Government of India".

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 10

25 pilgrims killed as bus falls into gorge in Uttarakhand

M.P. residents were on the way to Yamunotri temple

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
UTTARKASHI

Twenty-five pilgrims from Madhya Pradesh were killed and three critically injured on Sunday evening when the bus in which they were travelling fell into a deep gorge *en route* to the Yamunotri temple in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand.

The accident took place near Rikhavu Khadd on the way to the Himalayan temple around two km from Damta on National Highway 94, District Disaster Management Officer Devendra Patwal said.

The pilgrims were from Panna district in Madhya Pradesh, Additional Chief Secretary Radha Raturi said. Besides the driver and the helper, there were 28 passengers on the bus. Seventeen bodies have been recovered so far, Mr. Patwal said.

The three injured have been admitted to the Community Health Centre in Damta.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami visited the disaster control room at the Secretariat immediately after the accident. He asked the District Magistrate of Uttarkashi to speed up relief and rescue operations.

"Officials concerned have been instructed to investigate the accident. May God grant the departed souls a place at his feet and strength to their family members to bear the pain. Also, I pray for the speedy recovery of all those injured," Mr. Dhami said in a tweet in Hindi.

Fatal fall: The bus that fell into a deep gorge in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand on Sunday. • PTI

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan spoke to Mr. Dhami for an update on the situation.

Ex gratia announced

President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttarakhand Governor Gurmit Singh expressed grief over the loss of lives in the accident.

"The news of the bus accident in Uttarakhand is very painful. I express my condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. Under the supervision of the State government, the local administration is engaged in all possible assistance on the spot," the Prime Minister's Office said, quoting Mr. Modi. "The Prime Minister has announced an ex gratia of ₹2 lakh each from the PMNRF for the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the accident in Uttarakhand. The injured would be given ₹50,000 each," it added.

President Kovind expressed his condolences to the families of the deceased. "I feel pained by the sad news of the death of people in a bus accident in Uttarakhand," he tweeted in Hindi.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to Mr. Dhami after the accident.

"It is very sad to hear about the bus of devotees falling into a gorge in Uttarakhand. I have spoken to Chief Minister @pushkardhami on this. Local administration and SDRF teams are engaged in rescue work. NDRF is also reaching there soon," Mr. Shah said in a tweet in Hindi.

10% ethanol blending goal met, says PM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India has achieved the target of 10% ethanol blending in petrol, five months ahead of schedule, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday.

This, he claimed, had led to a reduction of 27 lakh tonnes of carbon emissions and saved foreign exchange worth ₹41,000 crore. Farmers earned ₹40,600 crore in the past eight years due to increase in ethanol blending, Mr. Modi said at an event organised by the Isha Foundation.

Last June, Mr. Modi made public the "Road map for ethanol blending in India, 2020-25", which laid out a pathway for achieving 20% ethanol blending by 2025-26.

The 10% blending target was to be achieved in November 2022.

Fourth arrest in Hyderabad gang-rape case

MARRI RAMU
HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad police on Sunday arrested a third child in conflict with law in the case of a gang-rape of a minor. He was being presented before a juvenile court, Deputy Commissioner of Police Joel Davis said.

Another accused, Saduddin Malik, has been remanded in judicial custody. Police teams are on the lookout for the fifth accused, Omer Khan. The police found that the vehicle used for the crime was cleaned by the accused.

Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan directed the Chief Secretary and the DGP to present a report within two days.

7 girls drown in pit near dam in T.N.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CUDDALORE

Seven girls drowned in a deep water-filled pit near a check dam built across the Gedilam river at A. Kuchipalayam, near Cuddalore, in Tamil Nadu on Sunday.

The police said the girls gathered near the 15-foot-deep pit located 300 metres from the check dam at noon. The pit was filled with water after the recent rain. They entered into the water to take bath. When they ventured into a deeper part of the pit, two of them were trapped inside and started drowning. The others tried to rescue them, but they too drowned. On information, Fire and Rescue Services personnel retrieved the bodies and sent them for post-mortem examination to the Government General Hospital in Cuddalore.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 10

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Text & Context

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NEWS IN NUMBERS

Ethanol mixing

10 The percentage of ethanol blended into petrol in India, five months ahead of schedule as the country aims to double the blend by 2025-26 to cut oil import dependence and address environmental issues. Though the original target timeline for doping ethanol, extracted from sugarcane and other agri-commodities, was November 2022, it was achieved in June due to the effort of public sector oil marketing companies. This led to a forex impact of over ₹41,500 crore and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 27 lakh tonnes. PTI

Vaccinating the old

4.7 In crore, the population aged 60 and above in India to be targetted in the administration of the precaution dose of the COVID-19 vaccine under its ongoing Har Ghar Dastak 2.0 campaign. Of the estimated 13.75 crore senior citizens in the country, 11.91 crore have been administered both doses till June 3. Of the 6.67 crore beneficiaries in the age group due for the booster dose till July 31, 1.94 crore have taken the shot. In 27 States, the coverage of precaution doses among 60 years and above is below the national average of 42%. PTI

Power from Nepal

144 In megawatts (MW), the additional power exported by Nepal's Kaligandaki hydropower plant to India through its power exchange market. Due to continuous rainfall this year, the Himalayan nation is exporting surplus electricity to India for the second consecutive year, according to the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA). The average rate of selling electricity was around ₹7, according to the Deputy Chief of NEA. The electricity is being exported to India under the Nepal-India power exchange agreement. PTI

By the power of the Sun

25 In crore units, the volume of solar energy generated by the Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL) from various solar PV installations at the airport till date, offsetting 1,60,000 metric tonnes of carbon emissions. CIAL is the world's first airport fully powered by solar energy. CIAL, which started its solar initiative in 2013 with a 100 kilowatts peak (kWp) pilot plant, now has a total installed solar capacity of 50 megawatts peak (MWp). In 2015, CIAL attained the status as the world's first airport to be fully powered by solar energy. PTI

Slower growth

5 In percentage, the growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) of Pakistan for the upcoming fiscal year beginning on July 1, from 5.9% in the outgoing year, following budgetary tightening aimed at winning the International Monetary Fund's support, according to the government. The planning Ministry made the estimates ahead of the annual budget to be presented on June 10. GDP growth will slightly decrease and is envisaged at 5% for 2022-23 on the back of agriculture (3.9%), manufacturing (7.1%) and the services sector (5.1%). REUTERS

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

EXPLAINER

The status of eVTOL: a soon to be reality?

What powers electric vertical take off and landing aircraft? What new regulations and policy changes does India need to better integrate electric vertical aircraft?

THE GIST

- The Government of India is exploring the possibility of inviting manufacturers of Electric Vertical Take off and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft to set up base in India. Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has been reported as asking Beta Technologies, which has a partnership with the Blade group (it has a presence in India), to look at the Indian market.
- An eVTOL aircraft is one that uses electric power to hover, take off, and land vertically. This is technology that has grown on account of successes in electric propulsion based on progress in motor, battery, fuel cell and electronic controller technologies and also fuelled by the need for new vehicle technology that ensures urban air mobility (UAM).
- The global market for eVTOLs was put at $8.5 million in 2021 and is to grow to $30.8 million by 2030. The demand will be on account of green energy and noise-free aircraft, cargo carrying concepts and the need for new modes of transport.

MURALI N. KRISHNASWAMY

The story so far: The Union Civil Aviation Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia, has said that the Government of India is exploring the possibility of inviting manufacturers of Electric Vertical Take off and Landing (eVTOL) aircraft to set up base in India. The Minister had been on a visit to the U.S. and Canada in April and in his interactions with key players in the industry, it was said that several eVTOL players were 'keen on setting up production centres' in the country. In late May, while speaking at "India@2047", which was part of the seventh edition of the India Ideas Conclave in Bengaluru, the Minister also said that India is in 'conversation' with a number of eVTOL producers – the implication being a futuristic vision for India.

What is eVTOL?

As the acronym suggests, an electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft is one that uses electric power to hover, take off, and land vertically. Most eVTOLs also use what is called as distributed electric propulsion technology which means integrating a complex propulsion system with the airframe. There are multiple motors for various functions; to increase efficiency; and to also ensure safety. This is technology that has grown on account of successes in electric propulsion based on progress in motor, battery, fuel cell and electronic controller technologies and also fuelled by the need for new vehicle technology that ensures urban air mobility (UAM). Thus, eVTOL is one of the newer technologies and developments in the aerospace industry.

An article in *Inside Unmanned Systems*, a leading business intelligence platform, describes eVTOL as being "a runway independent technological solution" for the globe's transportation needs. This is because it opens up new possibilities which aircraft with engines cannot carry out in areas such as manoeuvrability, efficiency and even from the environmental point of view. The article adds that there are an estimated 250 eVTOL concepts or more being fine-tuned to bring alive the concept of UAM. Some of these include the use of multi-rotors, fixed-wing and tilt-wing concepts backed by sensors, cameras and even radar. The key word here is "autonomous connectivity". Some of these are in various test phases. There are also others undergoing test flights so as to be certified for use. In short, eVTOLs have been likened to "a third wave in an aerial revolution"; the first being the advent of commercial flying, and the second, the age of helicopters.

Why are the developments in powering eVTOLs?

An article in *Avionics International* says the roles eVTOLs adopt depends on battery technology and the limits of onboard electric power. Power is required during the key phases of flight such as take off, landing and flight (especially in high wind conditions). There is also the important factor of weight. BAE Systems, for example, is looking at formats using a variety of Lithium batteries. Nano Diamond Batteries is looking at "Diamond Nuclear Voltaic (DNV) technology" using minute amounts of carbon-14 nuclear waste encased in layered industrial diamonds to create self-charging batteries. There are some industry experts who are questioning the use of only batteries and are looking at hybrid technologies such as hydrogen cells and batteries depending on the flight mission. There is even one that uses a gas-powered generator that powers a small aircraft engine, in turn charging the battery system. But whatever the technology, there will be very stringent checks and certification requirements.

What are the challenges?

As the technology so far is a mix of unpiloted and piloted aircraft, the areas in focus include "crash prevention systems". These use cameras, radar, GPS (global positioning system) and infrared scanners. There are also issues such as ensuring safety in case of powerplant or rotor failure. Aircraft protection from cyberattacks is another area of focus.

A third area is in navigation and flight safety and the use of technology when operating in difficult terrain, unsafe operating environments and also bad weather.

How did it begin?

There is general agreement that the eVTOL world is moving forward based on the spark provided by NASA researcher Mark D. Moore who came up with the concept of a personal (one man) air vehicle while working towards his doctorate. Called the "Puffin" and thought of in 2009-10, it was about four metres tall and with a wingspan of 4.4 metres. It had 60hp electric motors that powered two propellers. Its other specifications included a four-point landing gear, a weight of 272kg, 45kg of batteries, a pilot payload of about 90kg, fetching it a total weight of 407 kg. Its top speed was under 245 kmph with a range of about 80km. A prototype was unveiled in 2010 and the concept was discussed at a conference on aeromechanics in 2010, according to an article in *Electric VTOL News*. In his paper, "NASA Puffin Electric Tailsitter VTOL Concept", Moore described "electric propulsion as offering dramatic new vehicle mission capabilities, ... but the only penalising characteristic" being "the current energy storage technology level".

Are there any big players now?

Since then there have been a number of ideas by industry, such as the Volocopter VC1 from Germany and the Opener BlackFly from the U.S. The top aircraft manufacturers, Airbus and Boeing, have also joined the race. Airbus unveiled its prototype, Vahana Alpha One or the Airbus Vahana (from the Sanskrit Vahana), at the Paris Air Show in 2017. It was pitched as a "cost-comparable replacement for short-range urban transportation" based on a fan-run tilt-wing design. Prototypes made test flights. Airbus then shifted to the "CityAirbus" project (air taxi) which has propellers and direct-drive electric motors.

Boeing is working on the Boeing Passenger Air Vehicle, as an "American autonomous personal air vehicle prototype". However, the major disruptors have been start-ups, backed by huge dollar flow.

A company, Lilium, started in 2015, which claims to be the "developer of the first all-electric vertical take-off and landing eVTOL jet", says that it is moving towards developing prototypes "designed to extract over 100kW of power from a system weighing just over 4kg" – which gives us an idea of the advancements. Its Lilium Jet theory has been designed for concepts such as private flights, six-seater passenger flights, or no seating for the zero-emissions logistics market.

It says that the concept looks to connect towns and cities (40km-200km) at speeds of up to 300km/h. It has called this as aimed at Regional Air Mobility, which it clarifies is not to be confused with Urban Air Mobility (UAM) – connecting intra-city points over shorter distances, or less than 20 km. It is also working on a seven-seater model, for use in existing helipads; In the U.S., for example, this would mean approximately 14,000 possible locations. The power demand across different phases of flight and the predicted range have been discussed in detail in a technology paper.

China, Israel and the U.K too have programmes to look out for.

How does one get an idea of the kinds of eVTOLs?

Electric VTOL News, for instance, has a World eVTOL Aircraft Directory. Started in 2016 and listing half-a-dozen known designs, it has now progressed to categorising almost all known electric and hybrid-eVTOL concepts. Categories are: "Vectored Thrust", where any thruster is used for lift and cruise; "Hover Bikes/Personal Flying Devices", which are single-person eVTOL aircraft and in multicopter-type wingless configurations; "Lift and Cruise", where independent thrusters are used for cruise and lift without any thrust vectoring; "Wingless (Multicopter)", or where there is no thruster for cruise but only for lift; and "Electric Rotorcraft" or eVTOLs that use a rotor, such as an electric helicopter or autogyro.

What about certification?

Some companies have concepts that are aimed at dual certifications by regulatory agencies in the western world. In March this year, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority announced being engaged in discussions focused on "facilitating certification and validating new eVTOL aircraft, their production, continued airworthiness, operations, and personnel licensing". Both bodies also highlighted the need to maintain very high safety standards. Further to this, eVTOL technology is to use existing regulatory frameworks despite being in the form of new and emerging technologies. The FAA has clarified that it plans to certify eVTOLs as powered-lift aircraft (an existing category) but in future, "develop additional powered-lift regulations" for innovation in operations and pilot training. It plans to use a "special class" process in 14 CFR 21.17(b) to oversee the unique features of emerging powered-lift models. But this certification will use the performance-based airworthiness standards found in Part 23 of the FAA regulations. The FAA's important clarification that the changes will be gradual has been welcomed by eVTOL developers, who are leaning on the Part 23 framework as the bedrock for type certification.

An article in Inside Unmanned Systems, a leading business intelligence platform, describes eVTOL as being "a runway independent technological solution" for the globe's transportation needs.

EVTOL certification is also complex because of planned operations within urban areas, new battery systems and the need for higher levels of automated redundancy.

How has the progress been?

The Paris summer Olympics 2024 is expected to be the big moment, according to an article in *Bloomberg*. France is working on two dedicated routes to transport passengers. Landing and takeoff zones at the Pontoise-Cormeilles-en-Vexin hub are being tested on parameters such as noise levels, integration of drones and eVTOLs with existing air traffic, battery charging and also maintenance.

How will it be in India?

Mr. Scindia has been reported as asking Beta Technologies, which has a partnership with the Blade group (it has a presence in India), to look at the Indian market. An official from Blade India told *The Hindu* that Blade is an urban air mobility company that aims to connect places that are heavily congested and also not well connected by air services. The concept of 'Advanced Air Mobility' comes in, i.e., connecting places through vertical aircraft and thus skipping road travel. This is being done now by helicopters, but eVTOLs will step into this space.

The official said that Blade U.S. is currently working with electric vertical aircraft (EVA) manufacturers such as Beta Technologies and has partnered with them for an all electric fleet by the year 2024. eVTOLs are noise free, have a zero carbon footprint and are more affordable. Beta technologies and other EVA manufacturers have been extended an invitation to manufacture in India.

Amit Dutta, Managing Director, Blade India is the chairperson of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Taskforce for Urban Air Mobility. In his suggestions for policy and regulation changes to better integrate EVAs, he has advised regulatory authorities in India to look at: formulating regulations for pilotless vehicles, airworthiness certifications, and the need for a pilot's licence; implementing efficient energy management systems, onboard sensors, collision detection systems and advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence; having in place infrastructural support such as take-off and landing zones, parking lots, charging stations and what are called vertiports; creating a robust air traffic management system that is integrated with other modes of transportation, and putting in place a database to ensure operational and mechanical safety.

In addition to this, there are psychological barriers that need to be overcome when it comes to flying in a fully autonomous aircraft. Therefore, the official added, there needs to be a document that outlines compliance for eVTOLs and also aligns frameworks to meet the standards adopted in commercial aviation, especially when it comes to safety. The current timeline for certification with India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation is two years. The Blade India official says that there is a need for a committee to spell out the guidelines for eVTOL operations and speed up the process.

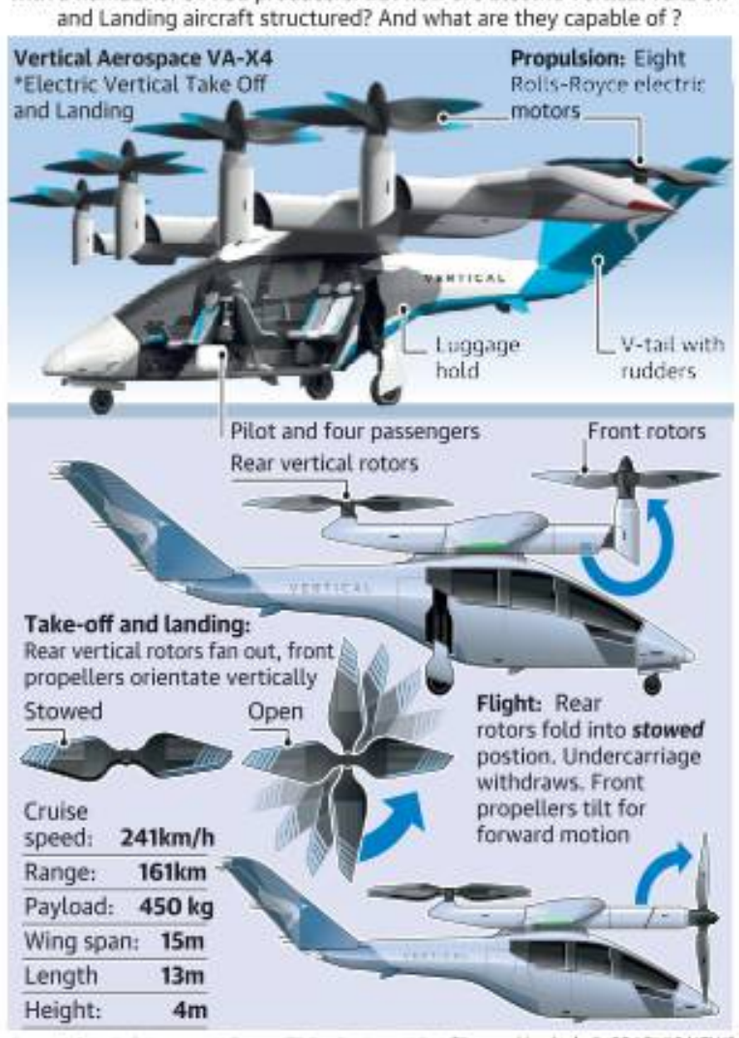
What is the value of the market?

The global market for eVTOLs was put at $8.5 million in 2021 and is to grow to $30.8 million by 2030. The demand will be on account of green energy and noise-free aircraft, cargo carrying concepts and the need for new modes of transport.

According to the Blade India official, the UAM market is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 25% between 2018-25. By 2025, it is anticipated to be a $74 billion market. This includes the eVTOLs market since UAM ideally focuses on the use of eVTOLs, the official added.

What are electric aircraft?

The Union Aviation Minister while speaking at the seventh edition of the India Ideas Conclave in Bengaluru, stated that India is in 'conversation' with a number of eVTOL producers. But how are Electric Vertical Take off and Landing aircraft structured? And what are they capable of ?



Sources: Vertical Aerospace, Future Flight, Business Wire Picture: Vertical © GRAPHIC NEWS

Green day

(From left) Tree saplings being planted at Freedom Park in the presence of Chief Commissioner of BBMP, Tushar Giri Nath, on the occasion of World Environment Day; an exhibition on e-waste being displayed at a mall, and Tourism, Environment and Ecology Minister B.S. Anand Singh inaugurating a programme organised by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board to mark the day, in Bengaluru on Sunday. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Students worry as PU admissions in many colleges are closed

This is even before the results of Central board examinations are out

JAYANTH R.
BENGALURU

Even before Class X students of Central board schools, like those affliated to CBSE and ICSE, get their exam results, many private PU colleges have closed I PU admissions, breaking the rules of the Department of Pre-University Education (DPUE).

Many private colleges announced on their notice boards that admission have been closed, creating panic among students and parents.

Chirag (name changed) told *The Hindu*, "I am a CBSE school student and am waiting for the Class X results. Along with the students who passed the SSLC exam, a popular college allowed us to submit the application for I PU. Now they have closed the admission and are saying that there is no vacancy, even before the Central board schools' results have come. We tried to contact the DPUE and there was no response from the officers. My parents and I are really scared about getting an admission in a good college".

A notice board on admissions displayed at Sri Kumaran Children's Home in Bengaluru.

What do the rules says? As the Class X results of Central board exams are usually late every year and keeping in mind the interest of students, the DPUE has made some rules in the PU college seat matrix, according to which, each college, including government, aided, and private PU colleges, must reserve 5% of the seats for CBSE, ICSE, and other Central board school students.

But most private PU colleges have completed the online and offline application process and already announced the first eligibility list on the basis of the pass percentage in the SSLC exam and have started admission. Some colleges have also completed the admission process and announced that admissions are closed.

Similar is the case with polytechnics which offer various technical three-year diploma courses.

The Department of Technical Education has already released the eligibility list for 14,507 students for five major courses, like Computer Science and Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering and June 8 is the last date of admission.

For the rest of the courses, the department is taking admissions on the basis of 'first-come, first-serve'.

Natesh, principal of MES PU Arts, Commerce and Science College, Malleswaram, said, "Ours is a government aided college. According the rules of the PU Department, we reserved 5% seats for Central board school students. After their results are announced, we will admit students based on merit".

DPUE officials were not available for comment.

NAAC planning to align accreditation, assessment with NEP 2020

'This is helpful as higher education should cater to all sections of people'

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is planning to align the assessment and accreditation process in higher education with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

'The System of Assessment and Accreditation in India', a White Paper draft prepared by NAAC, says the system of assessment and accreditation in India must be aligned to the National Education Policy 2020 and Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

"A robust system of accreditation should be created, based on the principles of transparency, self-disclosure, handholding, mentoring, incubation, and ongoing quality improvement. The manual for assessment may contain two parts: one exclusively covering the general education component, and the other covering the specialised education component. HEIs (higher education institutions) are to be assessed and accredited in a binary mode while units/programmes can be assessed and graded," it says, adding that the assessment approach needs to shift from the "input-driven mode to assessing the outcomes of education."

HIGHLIGHTS

- System of assessment and accreditation in India must be aligned to the National Education Policy 2020 and Sustainable Development Goals 2030
- A robust system of accreditation should be created, based on the principles of transparency, self-disclosure, handholding, mentoring, incubation, and ongoing quality improvement
- The manual for assessment may contain two parts: one exclusively covering the general education component, and the other covering the specialised education component
- HEIs are to be assessed and accredited in a binary mode while units/programmes can be assessed and graded

"Technology-enabled, real-time formative assessment needs to be introduced to reduce the burden of HEIs in data collection. A Multiple-Accreditation-Agencies model needs to be developed carefully so as to meet growing needs," it adds.

S.C. Sharma, Director of NAAC, told *The Hindu*, "Karnataka is the first State which implemented the NEP. In the coming years, other States will also follow. So, our executive chairman has asked us to map to our seven criteria with NEP 2020 and Sustainable Development Goals 2030. This is helpful as higher education should cater to all sections of people, like socio-economic disadvantaged groups, and autonomous colleges, multidisciplinary colleges, all the matrix should be captured in an effective manner".

Proposed framework

Now, the function of NAAC is monitoring of quality compliance of the HIEs. But the proposed functions are quality enhancement, quality maintenance, assessment, and accreditation.

In future, instead of graded accreditation of HEIs, binary accreditation of HEIs and graded accreditation of academic programmes/constituent units will come. The focus of assessment and accreditation will be based on learning outcomes. Criteria for assessment and accreditation will be function and outcome-based on general educatedness, skills/abilities for specialised education, contribution to research/innovation, says the White Paper.

READER'S MAIL

Road congestion

Sir, – At Indiranagar, as the stretch of 100 ft. Road, from CMH road junction to Old Madras Road, is being white-topped, vehicles going towards K.R. Puram and beyond are forced to use the 80 ft. Road to reach Old Madras Road.

The problem is further compounded as vehicles coming from Banaswadi reach the junction of 80 ft. Road and Old Madras Road and then take a U-turn or turn right on 80 ft. Road. Vehicles get piled up at the junction and to relieve the congestion, it is suggested that the vehicles moving towards Old Madras Road from the double road are allowed to turn right at the junction of Old Madras Road.

MAJ. GEN. N.R. ANANTH,
Bengaluru

Tips to make Bannerghatta better

Sir, – The Bannerghatta National Park is the envy of any megacity anywhere. It, however, lacks on several fronts. At its approach through the bus stand, one sees old piled-up garbage and haphazardly put up petty shops. The pathways within the zoo area are uneven; the underground concrete protrudes out at several spots, and moving a baby's buggy or a wheelchair is difficult.

During the weekend and holiday rush hours, one has to wait for over an hour to take the tiger safari, even after making an advance online booking.

The authorities should provide separate enclosures for those who have booked for the next two time slots. They might also consider enhancing the present differential of ₹50 in entry ticket prices on weekends to attract more footfall on weekdays. Also, halt stations for the electric buggies should be serially marked along with their halt duration.

KAMAL LADDHA,
Bengaluru

Readers can email to letters.bangalore@thehindu.co.in

Gang held for robbery

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

A gang of three persons, who had allegedly assaulted an engineer and the staff of a private telecom company to rob ₹900 from them, was arrested by the Yelahanka police on Sunday.

The accused, Muniraju, 21, Muniraju, 25, and Ajith Kumar, 24, were arrested based on a complaint filed by Abhilash, engineer with a private company.

Based on the complaint, the police analysed the CCTV camera footage and other details from in and around the area to track down the accused.

Newly-married software engineer found dead at her house

She was harassed by in-laws: Kin

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

A 25-year-old newly-married software engineer was found dead at her house in Subramanyanagar on Saturday.

The deceased was identified as Anju, a native of Chikkamagaluru. She married Anjan Kaniyar four months ago. Her family alleged that Ms. Anju complained to them about harassment from her in-laws a fortnight ago.

On Saturday, when her parents tried to call her, her number was not reachable. Later, they were informed that she had ended her life.

The family has alleged that she had been tortured by her in-laws which led her to take the extreme step. The police have registered a case of unnatural death and are awaiting the post-mortem report to ascertain the cause of death to take further action.

(Those in distress or those having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani Ph.: 104 for help)

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
ATAL BHUJAL YOJANA
Office of Project Director,
No 1/1, First Floor, KSFC Bhavan, Thimmaiah Road,
Near Cantonment Railway Station, Bengaluru - 560052

Notification No: Atal Jal/PROC/18/2022-23/Call-2 Date: 06-06-2022

Short Term Tender Notification through E -Procurement Providing vehicles on Monthly basis with drivers to SPMU Office

Atal Jal, SPMU invites tenders from registered eligible transport agency to submit their proposals with necessary documents.

The detailed notification regarding eligibility and other details can be obtained by logging on to www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in. The tender document can be downloaded from 06-06-2022, 11:30 hrs onwards and last date for receipt of tender is on or before 14-06-2022, 17:30 hrs

Further details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned during the office hours from 10:00 AM to 5:30PM

Sd/-
Tender Inviting Authority
SPMU, Atal Bhujal Yojan, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/767/AKAR/22-23

COVID-19 - DON'T SPREAD RUMOURS, ACT RESPONSIBLY, AVOID INFECTION-NOT THE INFECTED.
Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

RASHTRIYA MILITARY SCHOOL, BENGALURU
(A Residential Public School under Ministry of Defence
Govt of India & Affiliated to CBSE, Delhi)

Required Teachers on Contractual basis:-

No	Vacancy	No of Vacancy
(a)	Master Gazetted (PGT, Physics)	(01)
(b)	Master Gazetted (PGT,Maths)	(01)
(c)	Assistant Master(TGT,Chemistry)	(01)
(d)	Assistant Master(TGT,Maths)	(01)
(e)	Assistant Master (TGT Hindi)	(01)
(f)	Assistant Master (TGT, Computer Science)	(01)
(g)	Counsellor	(01)

(open to all categories)
Eligibility ,service conditions and Application Forms are available on www.rashtriyamilitaryschools.edu.in
Last date for submission of application is 21 days from the date of publication of advertisement.

Principal

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Only Through e-Procurement Portal)

BWSSB invites Tenders from Registered Contractors for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (East), 7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009

Sl No.	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to Tender / EMD Amount	Last date & time for Submission of Tender	Date & time for Opening of Tender
1.	East-2	BWSSB/EE(E)-2/PB /304/2022-23 Dated:04.06.2022	₹ 29,11,793/- / ₹ 58,300/-	20.06.2022 upto 4:00 pm	22.06.2022 after 5:00 pm
2.		BWSSB/EE(E)-2/PB /305/2022-23 Dated:04.06.2022	₹ 12,46,254/- / ₹ 31,200/-		
3.		BWSSB/EE(E)-2/PB /306/2022-23 Dtd:04.06.2022 (Reserved for ST Category)	₹ 10,99,033/- / ₹ 13,800/-		
4.		BWSSB/EE(E)-2/PB /307/2022-23 Dtd:04.06.2022 (Reserved for SC Category)	₹ 18,00,534/- / ₹ 22,600/-		
5.		BWSSB/EE(E)-2/PB /308/2022-23 Dated:04.06.2022	₹ 15,80,639/- / ₹ 39,600/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (East-2)

Office of the Chief Engineer (Design), 9th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009

6.	Central Stores	BWSSB/EE(CStr)/AEE/AE/ STR/163/2022-23 Dated: 01.06.2022	₹ 76,91,255/- / ₹ 1,53,825/-	01.07.2022 before 4:00 pm	04.07.2022 at 12:00 noon

Sd/- Executive Engineer (Central Stores)

The detail regarding the tender & participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours.

STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.
Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

DIPR/754/2022-23

IN THE HON'BLE COURT OF THE LXI ADDITIONAL CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE, AT BENGALURU (CCH-62)
O.S.NO. 384/2021

BETWEEN:
M/s. Bangalore Soft Drinks Pvt. Ltd., ...Plaintiff
AND
M/s. Sri Krishna Shelters Pvt. Ltd., and other .... Defendants

NOTICE OF APPEARANCE TO THE DEFENDANT NO. 3

JAGADISHKUMAR SAMPIGERUDRAIAH
Director, Sri Krishna Shelters Pvt. Ltd.,
Office at No. 59, Sri Krishna Sadha, West Anjaneya Street Gandhi Bazar, Bangalore- 04 .... Defendant No.3

Whereas, the Plaintiff have instituted the above suit seeking permanent injunction against the Defendants, their agents servants, henchmen or any other persons claiming through them or acting through them from interfering with the plaintiff's possession of the Suit Schedule property and for related/consequential reliefs more particularly set out in the Plaint.

Take notice / summons that Mr. Jagadishkumar Sampigerudraiah, Defendant No. 3 hereinabove is hereby called upon to appear before the Hon'ble Court in person or through Advocate on 08-07-2022 at 11:00AM to contest in the above suit failing which the matter will be heard and determined ex-parte.

SUIT SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Item No.1
All the part and parcel of the residentially converted land measuring 2 Acres 6 Guntas in Sy.No. 19/1A including 01 guntas of kharab land situated at Nayandahalli Village, Kengeri, Hubli, Bengaluru. South Taluk and bounded on
East by: Road leading to Sports Authority of India
West by: Property in Sy.No. 17
North by: Property in Sy.No. 21
South by: Property in Sy.No. 19/2

Item No.2
All the part and parcel of the residentially converted land measuring 22 Guntas in Sy.No.19/3A including 01guntas of kharab land situated at Nayandahalli Village, Kengeri Hubli Bengaluru. South Taluk and bounded on the
East by: Road leading to Sports Authority of India
West by: Property in Sy.No.19/2
North by: Property in Sy.No.19/2
South by: Bengaluru-Mysore Road

Item No.3
All the part and parcel of the residentially converted land measuring 2 Acres in 10 Guntas in Sy.No.19/2 including 01guntas of kharab land situated at Nayandahalli Village, Kengeri Hubli Bengaluru. South Taluk and bounded on
East by: Road leading to Sports Authority of India
West by: Property in Sy.No.19/2
North by: Property in Sy.No.19/1A
South by: Bengaluru-Mysore Road
Given under my hand and the seal of this court, this day 26 of May 2022

BY THE ORDER OF THE HON'BLE COURT
Assistant Registrar
City Civil Court, Bengaluru-560001

Consel for the Plaintiff
SRI. SHREYAS JAYASIMHA
Aarna Law LLP, No.5, 2nd Main Road, Vyalikaval, Bengaluru-560003

End game: Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, one of Meta's most powerful executives said on June 1 that she is leaving the tech giant. • AFP

CACHE

Sheryl Sandberg's complicated legacy

As the erstwhile Facebook COO decides to leave the social media giant, the empire she built on selling ads is facing numerous challenges

JOHN XAVIER

Facebook's chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg announced that she will be leaving the social network in the fall to pursue philanthropic work. Her announcement has come at a tough time when Facebook is facing an uncertain future and fierce competition. It also comes at a time when her influence at the company, she helped build, is waning.

Ms. Sandberg joined Facebook when it was just a start-up and its founder Mark Zuckerberg, only 23 years old. The ex-Google employee who oversaw the search giant's online sales and operations during her stint between 2001 and 2008 brought her ad selling strengths to Facebook to build the platform's advertising empire. At Google, Ms. Sandberg was in charge of the company's AdWords and AdSense. The former helped place text ads on the search results page, and the latter put targeted ads on websites of other companies that contracted with the Silicon Valley company.

At Facebook, the Harvard-educated executive helped build a multi-billion dollar advertising empire, and made the social network a colossus. She developed a more sophisticated promotion system that was largely based on what she spearheaded at Google. But the layer of sophistication came from the network's ability (or potential at that time) to micro target users based on their interests and activities logged on Facebook's website. It helped to accurately identify potential customers to target more relevant ads.

An ad selling behemoth

Ms. Sandberg's strategy succeeded. Over 97% of Facebook's revenue in 2021 came from selling ads. But that success came at a cost. Sometime in 2018, things started to change for the California-based company after reports surfaced that data of Facebook users were used without their consent for political advertising. Britain-based consulting firm Cambridge Analytica, that managed former U.S. President Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign, agreed that it used nearly 30 million personally identifiable data of users from Facebook.

The information from Facebook was collected through an application called "This is Your Digital Life", which built psychological profiles of users to push ads (some focused on political campaigns). The revelations fundamentally changed how the social networking giant was generally perceived. Ms. Sandberg is partly responsible for Facebook's failures as the company initially deflected blame and denied the allegations. Under her leadership, the platform continued to witness fake news, which critics said damaged the overall fabric of society, flourish.

The ex-Google employee who oversaw the search giant's online sales and operations during her stint between 2001 and 2008 brought her ad selling strengths to Facebook to build the platform's advertising empire

Some prominent founders, including WhatsApp's Brian Acton faced issues with the company's fixation on growth at all cost. In a 2018 interview to *Forbes*, Mr. Acton recalled a meeting with Ms. Sandberg on his plan of charging the messaging app's users a fraction of a penny after sending a certain number of free messages. That idea was shot down with a terse, 'it won't scale' response. The interview shares details about the company's strong position on making money through selling ads, which is very different from what WhatsApp's founders wanted to do – make users pay, and keep advertisers at bay.

Hits and misses

Now, as Ms. Sandberg decides to leave the company, the empire she built on selling ads is facing a test. Apple's App Tracking Transparency (ATT) feature shaved off $10 billion from the company's revenue. The feature lets users stop apps from tracking them which leaves advertisers without an identifier to target Apple users. And in several instances, it doubled the cost of acquiring new customers and reduced yield from ad campaigns.

While Facebook tinkers with its advertising strategy, it is also fire-fighting its missteps that caused the Cambridge Analytical scandal, the U.S. Capitol attack, and most recently, its failure to act on harmful content that came to light after Frances Haugen released internal company documents. Ms. Sandberg oversaw all these incidents while she helmed the day-to-day operations of the social network.

Facebook stocks have also taken a massive hit. Since the start of this year, the company's stock has fallen 45% to $190 on Friday. It is unclear how Facebook will find its path back to a near trillion-dollar valuation, which it flirted with briefly last year.

A change in direction

Her exit also comes at a time when Mr. Zuckerberg's focus is fixed on building the metaverse, a nascent idea of creating digital worlds. And the CEO's choice of replacement gives a hint at what is to be expected at the social network.

Javier Olivan, a 14-year veteran at Facebook, will take the baton from Ms. Sandberg. The two have very different personalities. While Ms. Sandberg has been the public face of Facebook, and could be seen promoting her 'Lean In' philosophy, Olivan is reticent and has maintained a low profile. Accepting that it will be a tough job to fill Ms. Sandberg's shoes, Mr. Olivan noted that his role will be very different from his predecessor's. "I don't anticipate my role will have the same public-facing aspect, given that we have other leaders at Meta who are already responsible for that work," he wrote in a post.

This also means that when Mr. Zuckerberg went looking for a replacement, he had a reduced role in mind. So, Mr. Olivan will be running the company's day-to-day operations and leave the firefighting to Nick Clegg, who heads global affairs, and Jennifer Newstead, Meta's chief legal officer.

THE GIST

- Facebook's chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg has announced that she will be leaving the social network in the fall to pursue philanthropic work.
- Ms. Sandberg helped build a multi-billion dollar advertising empire. She developed a more sophisticated promotion system where the sophistication lay in the network's ability to micro target users based on their interests logged on Facebook's website. It helped to accurately identify potential customers to target more ads.
- Sometime in 2018, things started to change after reports surfaced that data of Facebook users were used without their consent for political advertising. Sandberg is partly responsible for this as the company initially deflected blame and denied the allegations. Also under her leadership, the platform continued to witness fake news flourish.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Bjorn Borg, the first man in the Open Era to win 11 Grand Slams, was born on June 6, 1956. Here's a quiz on Grand Slam greats

1 This German player and former world No.1 won the first of his six major singles titles at 17 years of age. Between 2013 and 2016, he coached another tennis virtuoso, who has won 20 Grand Slam men's singles titles, including a record nine Australian Open titles. Name both players.

2 Designed by Mirka Federer, this entity made its first appearance at the Wimbledon Championships in 2006. Thereafter, it found its presence in every merchandise exclusive to Nike and Roger Federer. Identify this entity, which gave Federer fans a new medium to express their allegiance to the tennis maestro.

3 This husband-wife duo are tennis greats in their own right. While she was ranked world No. 1 for a record 377 weeks and won 22 Grand Slam singles titles, he is an American former world No. 1 tennis player and an eight-time Grand Slam winner. Name the duo.

4 Known as 'the four musketeers' of tennis in their country, Jean Borotra, Jacques Brugnon, Henri Cochet, and René Lacoste lend their collective name to a trophy that is awarded to the winner of the men's singles event of a Grand Slam. Name the Grand Slam.

5 Upon viewing the finished version of this film, Serena said: "I think it was a great opportunity to see how amazing African-American fathers are. A lot of black men aren't seen in that light." Which movie is she talking about?

6 When asked if he was British or Scottish, this quick-witted player replied: "Depends on whether I win or not." Name this three-time Grand Slam winner.

7 Elijah McClain, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Trayvon Martin, George Floyd, Tamir Rice and Philando Castile. How did these names make their presence felt at the 2020 U.S. Open Championships?

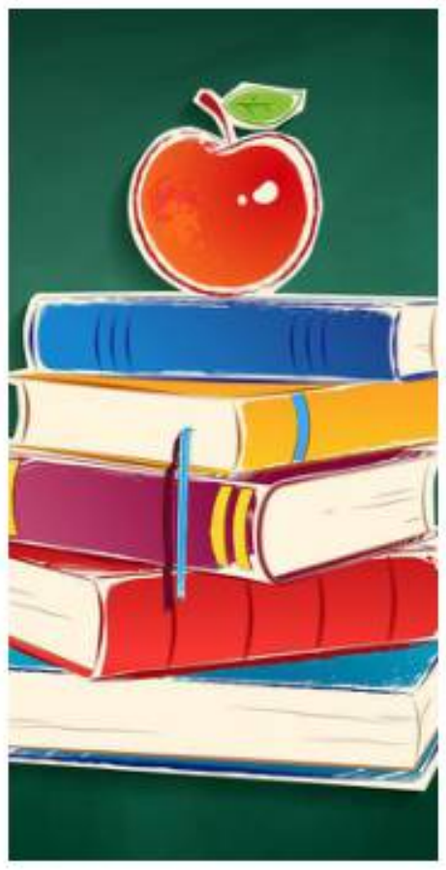
◄ Starring Emma Stone and Steve Carell, *Battle of the Sexes* is a 2017 biographical sports film based loosely on a 1973 tennis match. Name the protagonists of this film whose poster is pictured on the left.

Please send in your answers to the **dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in**

Questions (abridged) and Answers to the June 3 edition of the daily quiz: 1. The names of the brands from the lyrics/name of the jingles which were sung by KK in the 1990s. **Ans: (a) Jab Ghar ki Raunak Badani Ho- Nerolac (b) Dhak Dhak- Hero Honda (c) Yeh Dil Maange More- Pepsi**
2. The song and the film to which Deepika Padukone made her debut. **Ans: *Aankhon Mein Teri/ Om Shanti Om***
3. KK was one of the singers of 'Andangkaka Kondakari', a popular song in this Tamil film which won a National Award in the Special Effects Category. **Ans: *Anniyan***
4. KK made his debut as a playback singer to this music composer. **Ans: A.R. Rahman**
5. The title of the album which features the songs 'Yaaron' and 'Pal'. **Ans: Pal**
6. One of KK's inspirations who shares the same initials. **Ans: Kishore Kumar**
7. KK once said that it is difficult for him to sing in this language. **Ans: Malayalam**
Visual: The man who was responsible for arranging, composing and producing KK's first album. **Ans: Leslee Lewis**

Early Birds: Parveen Rewri| Khushi Bansal| Aparna Singh| Sriraam Kalingarayar

Compiled by: Ranjani Srinivasan



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Did you pass out yet?

All the latest songs have lines which earworm into your head and get stuck there

S. UPENDRAN

"Looks like your favourite singer's latest song has become an enormous hit."

"It certainly has. Everyone is humming it. In my case, I keep hearing it in my head all the time."

"I know what you mean. Quite a few of my friends are saying the same thing. For them, the song has become an earworm."

"What are you talking about? I've heard of tapeworms and ringworms, but I've never heard of earworms. Tell me, how can a song become a worm?"

"There are occasions when after listening to a song, you find that it keeps playing in your head all the time. No matter how hard you try to stop this from happening, you don't succeed."

"It's happened to me many times. It's like the song is stuck inside my head."

"Exactly! And it needn't be the entire song, either. It could be just a couple of lines from the song or just the tune."

"And sometimes, you sing aloud those two lines over and over again."

"And irritate the person sitting or standing next to you! Anyway, this song or tune that keeps playing inside your head is called an earworm. We have all experienced this sometime or the other. Here's an example. *My friend, Harini, is often plagued by earworms.*"

"*The first time I heard the jingle on TV, I hated it. But a few days later, it became an earworm.* How does that sound?"

"That's a good example. The word can be used as a verb as well. The jingle has earwormed its way into people's head."

"When that happens, you know that the ad campaign has been successful."

"True. How are you enjoying your time with your cousin from the States? This is his first visit to India, right?"

"Yes, it's Ravi's first visit to India. The good thing is, he's a great deal of fun. On the whole, we've been having a really good time. But every now and then, he laughs at the things I say. For example, when we were talking about our schooling, I told him that I passed out in 2014. He laughed. So, I asked him what there was to laugh about, and he..."

"That use of 'pass out' is peculiarly Indian. In India, it's common to hear people say, 'I passed out in 2003 or 2010' to mean that they completed their schooling or their B.A. in a particular year. But a native speaker of English would understand the sentence to mean 'I fainted in 2003 or 2010'."

"So 'pass out' means 'to faint'?"

"That's one of the meanings of the expression. For example, *Rohit passed out after playing in the hot sun for several hours.*"

"How about this example? *The children nearly passed out when they saw all that blood.*"

"Sounds good. But native speakers don't say, 'I passed out of college in 2013'."

"What do they say then?"

"They normally use the word 'graduate'. I graduated from college in 2013. It's also very common to hear them say 'complete' or 'finished'. I completed my schooling in 2003."

"Graduate, complete, finish, pass out- ...how does it matter?"

"In India, you can use any one of these."

I don't know anything about music. In my line of work, you don't have to

-Elvis Presley

upendrankye@gmail.com

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, JUN. 06	
RISE 05:53	SET 18:44
RISE 11:21	SET 00:00
TUESDAY, JUN. 07	
RISE 05:53	SET 18:44
RISE 12:10	SET 00:12
WEDNESDAY, JUN. 08	
RISE 05:53	SET 18:45
RISE 13:00	SET 00:50

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	34	26
Mysuru	33	22
Bengaluru	33	21

Bengaluru Today
32°C The weather will be little warm but humid. Night will be pleasant.Spell of rain and thundershower is likely.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
31°C A slight warm but humid weather to prevail. Night will be comfortable.Chances of rain and thundershower at some places.

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ACB notice to Yadgir Dy.SP

STAFF REPORTER
YADGIR

The Anti-Corruption Bureau has issued notice to Deputy Superintendent of Police in Yadgir Veeresh Karadigudda asking him to appear before it and give an explanation to a bribery complaint filed by Ragupathi Gowdigeri, owner of a truck and a private contractor.

The complaint said that Mr. Karadigudda and another personnel, a constable, Guttappagouda, demanded bribe.

THE HINDU
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Home expensive home

Many people are feeling the pinch as inflation makes their dream homes costlier

K.V. ADITYA BHARADWAJ
BENGALURU

Ashutosh T., a techie, started building his dream home in December 2021 and is yet to complete the project. But in the intervening period, he has overshot his budget by over 40% due to inflation in construction materials.

"I have seen the rally in the prices of construction materials throughout the past six months. From the Russia-Ukraine war, coal shortage to fuel prices, everything has been blamed. To add insult to injury, even my EMIs have gone up, given that after four years, the Reserve Bank of India hiked repo rates in the first week of May," he lamented.

This has been the experience of most homebuyers over the last six months. Even in the apartment sector, many builders are reportedly demanding an addition in the range of ₹100 to ₹200 per sqft citing inflation.

"There have been complaints in the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) against builders for violating agreements and demanding more money than previously agreed upon. But builders usually account for inflation in the agreements already," said M.S. Shankar, general secretary, Forum for People's Collective Efforts, fighting for homebuyers.

Suresh Hari, chairman, Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India (CREDAI)-Bengaluru, said, on an average, inflation in construction materials and the labour market had effectively increased the input costs in the sector by around 30 to 40%.

"In most new projects, there has been a cost escalation of at least 10%, with builders absorbing the remainder of the escalation. There has been a lot of stress on ongoing projects. Some builders are asking for an additional cost due to inflation, but homebuyers are unlikely to pay that due to contracts drawn up before," he said, adding the reduction in guidance value by the government had provided the sector some relief.

The last five months have seen a rally in most of the construction materials – cement, steel, sand, and bricks – in the range of 13 to 63%.

"The Russia-Ukraine war has reportedly disrupted supply of some raw materials to the cement industry. Coal shortage in the country and inflation in its prices has also adversely impacted cement and brick industries, for which coal is a prerequisite. There is also cartelisation jacking up cement prices. A 50-kilo bag that cost ₹340 in December-January, had shot up to ₹480 in March and again saw a correction to ₹430 now. A single piece of table-mounted brick has shot up from ₹7 to ₹10," said Khaleed Rehman, an architect with Centre for Vernacular Architecture.

Another material to see a steep increase in prices is steel. The cost of a tonne has shot up from ₹55,000 to ₹90,000.

"There is a serious lack of availability of skilled labour in the market, which has also shot up costs," Mr. Hari. "Many migrant labourers, who returned to their hometowns during the pandemic, haven't returned in full force yet, creating a shortage here. This has pushed the contractors to offer more wages to lure them, but even then there is a shortage. Easily there is a 15 to 20% inflation in labour wages in the market," Mr. Rehman said.

CREDAI has now demanded government intervention to regulate the prices of construction materials.

"The industry is picking up pace and volumes slowly over the last few months, but is marred by inflation. There is a need for the government to intervene and regulate prices or at least the misuse of circumstances by the industry artificially hiking prices," Mr. Hari said.

Even in the apartment sector, many builders are reportedly demanding an addition in the range of ₹100 to ₹200 per sqft citing inflation. • FILE PHOTO

INFLATION IMPACT

Fact sheet

Construction material	Price in January 2022 (in ₹)	Price in May 2022 (in ₹)
Steel	55,000 per tonne	90,000 per tonne
Cement	340 per 50 kg bag	430 per 50 kg bag
M-Sand	750 per tonne	800-850 per tonne
Table mount bricks	7 per piece	10 per piece

Citizens have a fruitful Sunday at Lalbagh

Mango and jackfruit mela makes a comeback after two years

THRISHA SAJEEV
ANN MARIA JAMES
BENGALURU

Apart from a routine Sunday morning walk, this weekend, people of Bengaluru were also going home with bags full of mangoes from Lalbagh.

The mango and jackfruit mela, organised by the Horticulture Department and Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation Limited (KSMDMCL), after two years, is turning out to be a big draw.

On a single lane, colourful cartons are filled with bright mangoes. People from other parts of the State are also coming to witness the mela on such a large scale.

While the usual favourites, such as Alphonso, Dashehri, and sugar baby, were being sold the most, at ₹250 per kilo the Imam Pasand was the costliest. Most of the vendors have been in the trade for many years, while some have just started selling mangoes.

Kaustubh from north Karnataka owns a 45-acre farm in Dharwad and having been in the mango business for about 22 years, this year is only the second time that he is attending the fair.

Some vendors, like Kaustubh, sell just one variety, be it Alphonso or Totapuri, since their farm soil and the water table are suitable for only certain types.

However, vendors such as Bhagyasree, sell 15 different varieties, including the Imam Pasand. She takes pride in selling organic mangoes, grown without the use of chemical fertlizers.

The only problem the vendors have at the mela is that of a maximum price ceiling. Many of them explained how they were just breaking even at the mela, with no particular profit.

"It's not really a profitable price, because there's a limit and transportation from Ramanagaram is also expensive" said Rakshit, a first-time vendor. However, many said that the fest serves as a great platform for branding, especially after they took a hit during the peak of the pandemic.

The customers had a general opinion of the price being steady and less than what vendors sold it for outside.

"Last time, there were a lot more stalls and vendors had put up their individual farm details, but now it is generic. Otherwise, we can reach out to them if we have the details," said Shyama, a mango buyer.

There were also children who were first-time visitors to the fair. They enjoyed tasting different mangoes and their delicacies, such as mango shake, chaat, and others.

There were also quite a few takers for jackfruits which were also being sold, along with its products in both sweet and savoury forms. The mela will go on at Lalbagh until June 13.

Man held on charge of vehicle theft

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Taverekere police on Sunday arrested a young man who, along with his associates, allegedly used to steal vehicles on the outskirts of the city.

The accused, Bharath Akira, 20, a resident of Bannerghatta, was arrested based on a complaint of the theft of a mini-bus on the Dodda Aaladamara road on May 27. According to the police, Bharath, along with his associates, Prajwal, Manoj, Murali, and Kalki, had allegedly intercepted the mini-bus on May 27, around 9.45 p.m., when the driver, Shekhar, was returning home.

The accused threatened him with weapons, assaulted him, and sped away with the mini-bus, the police said.

Based on the complaint, a special team was formed to track down the accused. Based on his confession, the police recovered the mini-bus, an autorickshaw, and 10 two-wheelers from him.

The accused would allegedly rob motorists of their valuables along with the bikes.

The accused would use the stolen vehicles to commit the offence and later sell it at throwaway prices, the police added.

Transport Department

Displaying Names, symbols on the Registration Plates of Vehicles is an Offence.

Public Notice

Consequent to the orders of the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka and directions issued by the Chief Secretary to Government of Karnataka, the general public are hereby informed that, **"Displaying of unauthorized names, emblems, names of the associations, on the registration plates of Boards/ Non-Governmental organisations is contrary to Rules 50 and 51 of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 and Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act 1950, and for such registration plates to be removed immediately."**

In spite of several publications from the Transport Department, vehicles with such unauthorized registration plates were seen plying on the roads and taking cognizance of the same, Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka vide order dated 27-05-2022 passed in Crl.P.No.1850/2017 has issued strict orders that action should be taken for immediate removal of such names, symbols, emblems etc., names of associations, organizations etc., general public on their private vehicles.

Therefore, it is informed again that, Board, Non-Governmental organisations and general public should remove such unauthorized registration plates with immediate effect. Further, if vehicles with such unauthorized number plates are seen in the public place, general public is requested to take a photo of vehicles along with details of location and send it to whatsapp No.9449863459 to take suitable action against the vehicle owners as per law.

Date :04-06-2022

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Innovate to eliminate

With World Environment Day just past, the Clean Technology Start-Up Challenge 2022 invites people to get involved in mitigating the impact of pollution

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

ARCHANA SUBRAMANIAN

Waste generation from industries is a looming problem that confronts our society. Plastic reuse and recycling is a $60 billion opportunity. Methods to increase the recyclability of plastics in circulation include advanced feedstock recycling to novel single-material packaging.

Then there are emissions from industrial processes. Gases like Carbon Dioxide and Sulphur Dioxide also add to the pollution problem. Industries are also looking to convert other waste into useable applications such as agriculture-soil modifiers, amenders, FCO-approved fertilizers and/or construction cement and Gypsum board.

With the Indian government putting in place regulations, individual and industrial consumers are looking for alternative solutions so they can step up and take responsibility.

Among the multiple attempts to deal with this issue is the Clean Technology Start-Up Challenge 2022. This collaboration between Hindalco Industries Ltd. and Manush Labs aims to re-imagine the thousands of tons of industrial waste and catalyse and empower technological innovations in the domains of clean technology and circular economy.

We want to find a collaborative solution to reduce the environmental load and move closer to our 'Net Zero carbon' goal

The programme will run for six months and support participants in prototyping, piloting, and scaling solutions through a network of technology and knowledge experts. "We want to find a collaborative solution to reduce the environmental load and move closer to our 'Net Zero carbon' goal of 2050," says Satish Pai, Managing Director, Hindalco Industries Ltd. and Director, Board of Aditya Birla Management Corporation Pvt. Ltd.

Piyush Verma, Founder and CEO of Manush Labs, explains that the challenge covers two problem statements. One is to replace up to 5,000 tons of plastic packaging annually. Second, utilise up to 7000 tonnes of FGD Process Waste annually.

The programme provides a platform for entrepreneurs and innovators (even if they haven't officially registered their start-up) to create solutions for these problem statements and "innovate to eliminate".

Who can participate

Verma says that anyone from across the world can take part, "irrespective of the stage of their idea". He is emphatic that students can also participate in the programme.

"Those selected will get deep-technical and scaling support from Manush Labs and get a chance to run paid pilot with Hindalco Ind. Ltd. They will also benefit from the technology and domain support from global experts and a chance to explore joint development wherever possible. A start-up or researcher needs to select only one problem statement track. Teams can apply multiple times if they have unique solutions. Ultimately, only one application per team will be considered for the programme."

For details of the programme, visit https://www.manushlabs.co/

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A symbol of freedom struggle is now a contested ideological ground

Hindutva groups want the installations at Veera Soudha gallery altered

K.V. ADITYA BHARADWAJ
BENGALURU

Bajrang Dal members led a bike rally to Vidurashwatha, known as the "Jallianwala Bagh of South India", on the occasion of V.D. Savarkar's birthday recently.

This is the place where local people agitating for the country's freedom were shot dead in 1938 by the British. At the centre of the small town stands a gallery on the freedom struggle, called Veera Soudha.

Though Suryanarayana Rao, national co-convener of the Bajrang Dal, insisted that the rally had nothing to do with the recent campaign by right-wing groups demanding "correction" of some installations, he said the freedom struggle gallery at the monument was "misleading."

"Our ideological fight to correct it will continue," he said. This was preceded by weeks of tension at the gallery, which hosts 105 exhibits depicting the freedom struggle from the Battle of Plassey to the liberation of Goa.

"At least four groups of Hindutva activists visited the gallery in a month's time and took objection to various exhibits, especially those depicting Hindutva communalism and its role in Mahatma Gandhi's murder. They have threatened to ransack the gallery if these exhibits are not removed," said B. Gangadhara Murthy, curator of the gallery.

Ramakrishna, caretaker of the gallery, expressed relief that the Bajrang Dal rally had passed off peacefully amidst tight police security.

Hindutva groups have taken objection to seven of the 105 exhibits: two depicting Tipu Sultan's fight against the British, one about a Hyderabadi Muslim boy Khair Mohammed facing sedition trial, two on Hindutva communalism and Gandhiji's assassination, and two more on the Adivasi struggle.

In the installation on Gandhiji's assassination, they want the photograph of V.D. Savarkar, mention of RSS ban post the murder removed, and the word "Hindu Communalism" replaced with "Hindu nationalism." They want the installation on Adivasi struggle rechristened "Vanavasi struggle."

"They claim that the gallery is too Mahatma Gandhi and Congress-centric and allege it glorifies Muslims. They want uncritical exhibits on V.D. Savarkar," Prof. Murthy said.

Exhibits at the Veera Soudha gallery that have become controversial as Hindutva groups have taken objection to them.

B.N. Shivakumar, president, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Gauribidanur unit, claimed that people of the town too had taken exception to some exhibits, adding that they had not threatened the gallery caretakers but only tried to "convince" them.

Veera Soudha, a tourist destination in the taluk, has now turned into a fortress with police protection for the gallery. Prof. Murthy has also been provided security. Amidst threats, the administration has banned photography within the gallery and is now wary of those who come in.

S. Aravind, a visitor, sad it was sad to see the gallery on the struggle for Indian independence becoming "a battlefield of ideological contest." "The fact that police have to guard this gallery today seems like a metaphor for our shared heritage being under threat of polarisation," he said.

Prof. Murthy, whose private initiative in a private trust led to the creation of the gallery in 2009, said he had relied on the 1985 NCERT publication "India's Struggle for Independence: Visuals and Documents" and he was baffled at how recorded history was being disputed. He said he was ready for a debate, but with documents.

Linguist and activist G.N. Devy, who visited Veera Soudha in the wake of the controversy, told *The Hindu* that it was telling that after over a decade and thousands visiting every year, these objections have to crop up now ahead of the Assembly polls.

Other cases

The taluk is seeing other instances of Hindutva mobilisation too. For instance, in Gauribidanur town, 8 km from Vidurashwatha, Dalit organisations wanted to install a statue of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar at the town's Ambedkar Circle.

As soon as an application was made, statues of Ram, Lakshman, and Sita were installed in March, 2022, claiming it was once a site of a Ram Mandir. The land is now disputed and guarded by the police. This year the town saw an unprecedented mobilisation on Ramnavami around the issue.

"The land was allotted to the Kodandarama Bhajana Mandali in 1965, but was cancelled by the Deputy Commissioner in 2014 as the committee had built shops. But when we sought to install an Ambedkar statue, an idol of Ram appeared," said C.G. Gangappa, a Dalit leader.

Dalit organisations staged a 19-day protest. The Bajrang Dal also held a rally at Allipura, a village dominated by Shia Muslims, around Id opposing cow slaughter.

'Textbook should say Basavanna propogated Veerashaiva religion'

There was no study with respect to history, says seer

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

The row over textbook revision has now started evoking micro-level responses. The Akhila Bharata Veerashaiva Shivacharyara Samsthe, an organisation that represents a section of Veershaiva seers, on Sunday said that it would have been better if the revised lesson on 12th century social reformer Basavanna had said that he had "propagated" Veerashaiva religion instead of saying that he "developed" the religion.

At the same time, the samsthe expressed its concurrence for what it called "blending of Basavanna with Veershaiva religion" in the Class IX Social Science textbook.

In a letter to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on behalf of the samsthe, Mahanthalinga Shivacharya, seer of Shreemadhvibhutipura Veerasimhasana Mutt, Bengaluru, described as "half truth" the lines in the revised lesson that said: "Basavanna achieved dhyana (meditation) by getting Linga deekshe (religious anointment) by the Shaiva guru".

"The fact that Veerashaiva has been cut short into Shaiva itself indicates a lack of study. Revising Veershaiva as Shaiva itself indicates that there was no study with respect to history," the seer said in the letter, while pointing out that Jaataveda Muni of Saranga Mutt had given Linga Deekshe to Basavanna. The muni was associated with the mutt belonging to the Veerashaiva tradition, he said.

"There were efforts to falsely project Basavanna, who was the real Veerashiva, as a Lingayat," the seer alleged.

Plaint filed against Rohith Chakrathirtha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Members of Iruliga Welfare Association, Ramanagaram, on Saturday filed a complaint against Rohith Chakrathirtha, who headed the textbook review committee, accusing him of insulting the community in the Class X Kannada textbook.

The association represented by Krishnamurthy in his petition to the Superintendent of Police, Ramanagaram, said that there was deliberate attempt to insult the community terming them as uncivilised, which according to the complaint, is liable for prosecution under atrocities act of 1989.

Rohith Chakrathirtha

The SP has now forwarded the copy of the complaint along with the content of the text to S. Selvakumar, Principal Secretary, Primary and Secondary Education Department, for further action.

Throw the revised textbooks into dustbin, says Siddaramaiah

'It has hurt the sentiments of Hindus and Kannadigas'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Stating that the revised textbooks have hurt the sentiments of not only majority Hindus but also six and a half crore Kannadigas, Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah on Sunday urged the State government to "throw the revised textbooks into dustbin."

"Education Minister B.C. Nagesh has revealed the reason for the revision by stating that it had been taken up since it has hurt the sentiments of Hindus. Who are these Hindus? The Education Minister should reveal. He should also reveal what has affected the sentiments of whom," Mr. Siddaramaiah said in a series of tweets on Sunday.

He pointed out: "The revised textbooks have ignored personalities such as Basavanna, Ambedkar, Savithri Bai Phule, Narayanguru, Kuvempu, and others. Aren't those protesting against the chairman of the textbook committee Hindus?" Further, he stated: "Scholars from Backward Classes and Dalit communities have not found representation in the committee. Are these communities not part of the scheme of things of Mr. Nagesh?"

He questioned if Basavanna and Ambedkar were ignored because they left Hinduism. "Were Narayana Guru, Periyar, and Kuvempu dropped because they pointed out at the shortcomings in Hinduism? The most poor in the country come from Dalit and Backward Classes. Most students in government schools are from these communities. Will the insult to Buddha, Basavanna, Ambedkar, Savithribai Phule, and Narayana Guru not affect the sentiments of these children?," he wondered.

EDUCATION PLUS

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Text & Context

A weekday feature on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) which includes explainers, special articles and a quiz. In the latest issue (June 3, Friday), the following explainers are available:

- The status of electric aircraft: a soon to be reality? - https://bit.ly/evtolstc
- Sheryl Sandberg's complicated legacy - https://bit.ly/SherylFB

Spotlight

- Dam over troubled waters: Why the Mekedatu water project continues to divide Karnataka and Tamil Nadu (Tamil Nadu edition) - https://bit.ly/MekeTNKtka
- How Lawrence Bishnoi fell on the wrong side of the law (Delhi edition) - https://bit.ly/delhi_bish
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RS elections: Guessing game continues for the fourth seat

Multiple strategies being discussed as part of efforts to register victory

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

With the brain-racking calculations over the numbers involved for the fourth Rajya Sabha seat from Karnataka, the race seems to have become intense and interesting as multiple strategies and calculations, including a possible cross-voting, are being discussed as part of efforts being made by parties to register victory.

While hectic parleys were seen in the BJP on Sunday, the Janata Dal (Secular) is learnt to be involved in back-channel talks with Congress leaders to see whether any last-minute understanding can be arrived at. Any understanding between the two parties could upset the BJP's calculations for the third seat. Dissidence in all the parties is being kept a close watch by others for possible cross-voting.

Lahar Singh Siroya (BJP), Mansoor Ali Khan (Congress) and Kupendra Reddy (JD-S) are in the fray for the fourth seat while the BJP and the Congress are set to win two seats and one seat, respectively, in the elections being held on June 10. Whoever receives the highest number of the remaining votes (after the first three seats) will be declared the winner for the fourth seat.

BJP sources said that party general secretary in charge of Karnataka Arun Singh met several leaders of the party on Sunday to strategise victory of all the three candidates in the fray. Among those discussed was a possible understanding between the JD(S) and the Congress. "Allocation of votes for our candidates depends on the kind of understanding that the Congress and the JD(S) arrive at. We have also kept our options open," BJP sources said, exuding confidence of winning three out of the four seats.

BJP leaders B.S. Yediyurappa, Basavaraj Bommai, and Nalin Kumar Kateel with party candidates for the Rajya Sabha elections Nirmala Sitharaman and Lahar Singh Siroya (left) at the time of filing nominations. • FILE PHOTO

JD(S) suggestion to Cong.

The JD(S) on its part is learnt to have suggested to the Congress to transfer its second preferential votes to its candidate, Mr. Reddy, since it is an uphill task for the Congress' second candidate to win. "The suggestion has come after the Congress central leadership conveyed that the party will not be able to withdraw its second candidate since it would send a wrong signal to the Muslim community," said sources aware of the developments.

JD(S) sources said that they were confident of retaining the flock together, and that whatever perceived dissidence had been tightened. "We are working towards securing about 38 votes, including 32 of our own," sources said, ruling out the possibilities of party leaders speaking to the Congress leadership again.

While the Congress central leadership is learnt to have allowed the State unit to decide on the possible understanding with the JD(S), the regional party is unwilling to speak to either Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah or KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar owing to local political pressures and a history of soured relationship.

Pact ruled out

Meanwhile, sources in the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee ruled out any understanding with the JD(S) at the moment. "I do not know what others are doing. We are dependent on those casting conscience vote and based on secular credentials. It was a unanimous decision taken by all leaders locally. We are protecting our honour," Mr. Shivakumar said.

Intense poll battle on for four Council seats

Elections in graduates, teachers constituencies on June 13

KARNATAKA BUREAU
BENGALURU/ HUBBALLI/ BELAGAVI

Amid a high-profile battle among parties to win the fourth seat of the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka, the State is also witnessing an intense poll battle for the four seats of the Legislative Council from graduates and teachers constituencies.

The elections to the four seats of the Upper House, scheduled for June 13, have been necessitated as the term of Arun Shahpur, K.T. Srikante Gowda, and Hanumnath R. Nirani are coming to an end on July 4. The former Chairman Basavaraj Horatti, whose term also ends on July 4, has resigned since he joined the BJP.

Pitted against associate

Seeking a record eighth successive victory from the Karnataka West Teachers constituency is Mr. Horatti, who shifted from the Janata Dal (Secular) to the BJP just before the elections apparently in a bid to retain the post of the Council Chairman for which support of the BJP is necessary. He is pitted against his close associate Srishaila G. of the JD(S) and one-time supporter Basavaraj Gurikar of the Congress. The Karnataka Rajya Madhyamika Shikshaka Sangha, which has backed him since 1978 when he was first elected, continues to back him and despite murmurs in the BJP over his selection, the party machinery is backing him.

For the first time in recent years, the BJP is facing an uphill task in the Karnataka Northwest Teachers constituency where BJP MLC Arun Shahapur is seeking a second term. He is facing a serious challenge from veteran Congress leader Prakash Hukkeri, a multiple-term MLA, MP, and MLC. Sources said that despite being the incumbent MLC, Mr. Shahpur is considered a greenhorn. However, a faction in the Congress, led by MLA Lakshmi Hebbalkar, is believed to be upset with Mr. Hukkeri for not campaigning enough for her brother in the recent Council election and the bypoll to the Belagavi Lok Sabha constituency. Sources said that though Congress strongman Satish Jharkiholi and Mr. Hukkeri are not best of friends, he has not opposed Mr. Hukkeri's candidature.

In the Northwest Graduates constituency, the BJP nominee and incumbent MLC Hanumant R. Nirani seems to be in a comfortable situation. The younger brother of Industries Minister Murugesh Nirani, he is among those in the Nirani clan who look after the business interests that span six sugar factories and educational institutions in Bagalkot and Vijayapura districts. Sunil Sunk, a Jharkiholi loyalist and the Congress candidate is challenging Mr. Nirani. Sources said that Mr. Hukkeri's support to Mr. Sunk is crucial in the constituency, and that is also a reason for Mr. Jharkiholi to not oppose Mr. Hukkeri's candidature.

JD(S) calculations

The Janata Dal (Secular), which is fighting to protect its seat in the Karnataka South Graduates constituency, has replaced its incumbent member K.T. Srikante Gowda with the former president of the Government Employees' Association H.K. Ramu, who is taking on Congress candidate Madhu Made Gowda. JD(S) sources said the party had plans to field Mr. Srikante Gowda in the Assembly elections and the decision to change the candidate was taken after consulting him. Political observers in Mandya believe that Mr. Madhu Made Gowda could gain sympathy votes this time since he lost his father and veteran leader G. Made Gowda recently, and also he has lost a couple of elections so far. "However, there is a tough fight between the two," a keen political observer said.

(With inputs from Sharath S. Srivatsa, Girish Pattanshetti, and Rishikesh Bahadur Desai)

'Textbooks should be devoted to knowledge'

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

Commenting on school textbook revision exercise, the former Vice-Chancellor of Bengaluru City University S. Japhet has said that "the wisdom of Kannada language acquired over many a thousand years is being washed away in no time in the name of textbook revision". He also said that textbooks should be devoted to knowledge and facts.

'Embroiled in illusion'

"Writings of scholars such as P. Lankesh and L. Basavaraju have been torn down alleging that the textbooks framed by the previous governments have Left-wing tendencies embedded in them. The committee, which is embroiled in the illusion of India being a 'global guru' and trying to make society believe that 'the past is great,' is trying hard to portray discrimination in Indian society as a natural phenomenon," he said.

Campaign against RSS will result in Congress losing its base in State: CM

'People know everything about the organisation'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU/BELAGAVI

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday accused the Opposition Congress of indulging in a "slanderous campaign" against the RSS and remarked that such a stand would result in the party losing its base in the State.

Speaking to mediapersons in Hubballi, the Chief Minister said such a campaign would not help serve their purpose as people know everything about the RSS.

'Won't react'

He said he would not react to Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah's criticism of the RSS, saying that the organisation did not need to be defended. "Everyone knows what the RSS is. There is no need to tell people that it is a nationalist, patriotic organisation involved in nation building. Everyone knows it already," he said.

Basavaraj Bommai

It was public knowledge that RSS volunteers had helped people in distress during natural calamities, he said.

'Known RSS baiters'

Describing the Congress and Mr. Siddaramaiah as known RSS baiters, he said the Congress had lost power as well as its base in many States due to such a stand. It would repeat in Karnataka too, Mr. Bommai remarked.

The Chief Minister said that Congress leaders were trying to play politics over textbook revision. Education Minister B.C. Nagesh would give a fitting reply to such critics soon, he said.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

Zameer sulking

Congress MLA and former Minister B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan *(in picture)* stayed away from the two-day 'Nava Sankalpa Shibira' organised by the party at a resort on the outskirts of Bengaluru last week.

Mr. Khan, who has been sulking for the past few months, also stayed away from the party functions addressed by the former Congress president Rahul Gandhi in April last and several rallies and functions subsequently.

Mr. Khan, who demonstrated his loyalty to the former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on several occasions, seems to be having differences with KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar. It was Mr. Shivakumar who issued notice to Mr. Khan when the latter made a controversial statement linking rape and wearing of the hijab. Later, Mr. Khan tendered an apology.

Mr. Shivakumar too has been irked by Mr. Khan who has often projected Mr. Siddaramaiah as the next Chief Minister.

While the Congress has wowed to support the rights of minorities ahead of the next year's Legislative Assembly elections, Mr. Khan seems to be maintaining distance from the party.

Recently, C.M. Ibrahim quit the party and joined the JD(S).

Fight to the finish

Leaders of the principal Opposition Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) are keen to ensure the victory of their candidates – Mansoor Ali Khan (Congress) and Kupendra Reddy (JD-S) – to deny the third seat to the ruling BJP in the Rajya Sabha elections from the State.

The BJP too does not have adequate numbers but has fielded Lahar Singh Siroya. This will surely lead to cross-voting among MLAs.

The Congress, which has fielded the son of the former Union Minister K. Rahman Khan, wanted the JD(S) to support its candidate since it supported the unopposed election of the former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda to the Rajya Sabha in 2020. But the JD(S) was keen on seeking the Congress support to deny victory to the "communal" BJP, sources said. But the Congress wants to boost its minority-friendly image and does not want to withdraw its candidate. With the JD(S) failing to strike a deal with the Congress, leaders of both the parties are likely to indulge in verbal contests ahead of the elections scheduled for June 10.

Police vs. JD(S)

The murder of a JD(S) member of the City Municipal Council in Hassan has led to a heated exchange of words between the police and JD(S) MLA H.D. Revanna *(in picture)* and his son and MP Prajwal Revanna.

The two JD(S) leaders staged a dharna in front of the hospital delaying the post-mortem. Police officers had a tough time handling the situation.

Superintendent of Police R. Srinivasa Gowda and Additional SP B.N. Nandini held talks with Mr. Revanna several times. Both the JD(S) leaders alleged that law and order had been affected in the city due to three officers – a Dy.SP, a police inspector, and a police sub-inspector. Leaders wanted the suspension of the three officers. It took hours before the post-mortem could be even started.

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+91-9810982719 bengaluru@shubhraranjan.com
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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, TATHAGATA Dilip Saha residing at A104, Aishwarya Opulence, Marathahalli, Bangalore-560037, have changed my name to Tathagata Saha, vide Affidavit dated 03-06-2022 before Notary Y.R.Chandrasekar, Bangalore.

I, CHAKRAVARTHY Iyengar, S/O. Sreekanth Atthibele Rajarama, R/O. 153, Sulikunte, Bangarpet Taluk, KGF (Kolar) 563114, have changed name to Chakravarthy Iyengar Atthibele Sreekanth vide affdvt dtd 03/06/22

I Kumari Mitu Prasad & Mitu Kumari Prasad D/O,Ajit Kumar Prasad R/o H.no-44, Tel Mill Gali,Madhukam,Ratu Road,Ranchi-834005 shall henceforth be known as Mitu Prasad affidavit no.133 sworn before notary Hare Krishna Gupta dated 12/12/2020.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT MAYOHALL, BANGALORE (CCH- 20)
O.S. No. 25659/2017
Between
ICICI Bank Limited having its Registered Office at ICICI Tower, Near Chakli Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara-390007. And its Branch Office at Mythri Centre, No.4/10, Hosur Road, Bommanahalli, Bangalore- 560068 ....Plaintiff
And
N. Muthukumar ...Defendant
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT
To,
N. Muthukumar,
Aged about 33 years,
S/o. Nataraj,
R/a. No.215/1A, Manjunath Building Road, Near Somashwara Temple, Old Madiwala, Bangalore-560068
....Defendant
Whereas the Plaintiff has instituted the above proceedings against you seeking Recovery of Rs. 4,00,066.69/- as on 27/02/2017 along with interest at 18% p.a. and other consequential reliefs. You are hereby summoned to appear before the Court of City Civil & Sessions Judge Mayo Hall Unit, Bangalore [CCH 20] in person or by a pleader duly instructed and able to answer all material questions relating to the above proceedings on 18/7/2022 at 11 A.M. Take Notice that in default of your appearance on the day mentioned before, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and the seal of this Court, this 03rd day of June, 2022.
Deputy Registrar
City Civil Court Mayo Hall Unit, Bangalore
Advocate for Plaintiff
Shiva & Co. Advocates,
No.109, Commerce House,
9/1, Cunningham Road,
Bangalore- 560052

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Hrishikesh Patil S/o Vijaykumar Patil, R/o B1 601, Ramky One North Appts., Doddaballapur Main Road, opp: BMSIT College, Avalahalli, Yelahanka, Bengaluru -560064 have changed my name to Hrishikesh V Patil for all purposes.

I, J.DEVAJAYAMANI, D O B 11-06-1954 W/o. D.Selvaraj(Late), R/o. No. FAE-445, 8th Cross, G.B.J. Quarters, HAL Colony, Marathahalli, Bengaluru-560037, have changed my name from J.Devajayamani to J.Devajaya Dharamani vide Affidavit dt: 03/06/2022 before Notary A.R.Muneer Ahmed, B'luru.

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LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE CITY CIVIL & SESSIONS JUDGE AT MAYOHALL, BANGALORE (CCH- 20)
O.S. No. 25678/2017
Between
ICICI Bank Limited having its Registered Office at ICICI Tower, Near Chakli Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodara-390007, And its Branch Office at Mythri Centre, # 4/10, Hosur Road, Bommanahalli, Bangalore- 560068 ....Plaintiff
And
Rajendra Prasadh ...Defendant
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT
To,
Rajendra Prasadh,
Aged about 33 years,
S/o. Shekarappa,
R/a. #18, 14th Main, 15th Cross, Muthyalanagar, Behind JP Park, Bangalore- 560054 ...Defendant
Whereas the Plaintiff has instituted the above proceedings against you seeking Recovery of Rs.7,00,232.09/- (as on 13/04/2017) along with interest at 18% p.a. and other consequential reliefs. You are hereby summoned to appear before the Court of City Civil & Sessions Judge Mayo Hall Unit, Bangalore [CCH 20] in person or by a pleader duly instructed and able to answer all material questions relating to the above proceedings on 11.08.2022 at 11 A.M. Take Notice that in default of your appearance on the day mentioned before, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and the seal of this Court, this 03rd day of June, 2022.
Deputy Registrar
City Civil Court Mayo Hall Unit, Bangalore
Advocate for Plaintiff
Shiva & Co. Advocates,
No.109, Commerce House,
9/1, Cunningham Road,
Bangalore- 560052

LEGAL NOTICE

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (ORDER 5, rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)
In the court of Sh. Anurag Chhabra
Civil Judge-03 (Central)
Room No. 15, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi
Suit No. : CS SCJ/1803/2021
Laxman Sharma
Versus
M/s Alankit Limited
To,
Mr. Nareshmal Chandmal Lodha
915, Prasad Chambers, Opera House, Mumbai-400004
M/s Manikanandan Stockists Pvt. Ltd.
Through its Director, Ist Floor, Ananda Mansion, , Sultanpur Cross, Bangalore-560053
Mr. P. Dayalan,
5, School Street, Sathuvachari, Vellore, MH-632009
The Defendant above named
WHEREAS you are intentionally evading service of summons It is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 01-07-2022 at 10:00 O clock the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex-parte.
GIVEN under my hand and the seal of the court, this 19-05-2022.
Sd/-
Civil Judge-03 (Central)
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi
(Seal)

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE FIRST ADDL. SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE: NELLORE, A.P.STATE
I.A.NO. 76/2021
O.S.NO.282/2018
Epuru Rajeswaramma
...Petitioner/Plaintiff
Vs
1.Vakati Venu Kumar Reddy(died)
2.Vakati Padmavathi
3.Vakati Vijaya Shankar
...Respondents/ Defendants
NOTICE
To,
R2. Vakati Padmavathi W/o Late Venu Kumar Reddy
R3. Vakati Vijaya Shankar S/o Late Venu Kumar Reddy
R2,R3 are residing at B20, Veralivas Vari Villa, Yelahanka, Bangalore, Karnataka.
Please take notice that the above Legal Representatives application is posted to 17-06-2022 For your appearance before the above said Honourable Ist Addl. Senior Civil Judge Court, Nellore at 10-30 A.M., you can appear either in person or through an Advocate and raise your objections if any. Failing which the above I.A. Will be decided in your absence, as exparte.
Hearing Date :17-06-2022.
R.N.SUNEETHA
Advocate for the Petitioner/Plaintiff, Nellore

IN THE COURT OF THE HON'BLE VI ADDL. FAMILY JUDGE AT BENGALURU
M C No. 3716 / 2020
PETITIONER : M. Vijaykumar, S/o Krishnamurthy, Aged about 50 years, No. 28, 3rd Floor, 1st Cross, Vibhuthipura Bengaluru North - 560 017.
Vs
RESPONDENTS : R1. Manjula W/o Vijay Kumar, Aged about 40 years, No.6, Mukambika Nilaya, Pipeline Road, Opp: Manjuantha Kalyanamantapa, Vajarahalli, Bengaluru - 560 062.
R2. Indrajith Nayak S/o Ravinath, Aged about 34 years, No.6, Mukambika Nilaya, Pipeline Road, Opp: Manjuantha Kalyanamantapa, Vajarahalli, Bengaluru - 560 062.
SUMMONS
Whereas the petitioner has instituted the above said case against you for decree of divorce under section 13(1)(i-a) &(i-b) of Hindu Marriage Act and other consequential reliefs. Hence you are hereby summoned to appear in this Court in person or by the pleader on 30.07.2022 at 11.00 A.M. to answer the same, failing which the case will be disposed in your absence by placing you EXPARTE.
Given under my hand the seal of the court, this 26th day of May 2022.
By Order of the Court, Sheristedar, Family Court, Bangalore.
Rathnappa V and Nagaraja S.A.
Advocates
No. 20, Sri Raghavendra Mansion Ground Floor, 1st Main Road, Sheshadripuram, Bengaluru-560 020.

IN BRIEF

Two elephant tusks seized in A.P.

RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

The police seized two tusks of an Asian elephant from an inter-State gang in Andhra Pradesh on Saturday. The Asian elephant falls under Schedule-1 species in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The police said two gang members were caught while they were waiting at a bus stand in the city reportedly to sell the tusks to their sources. The gang's Hyderabad-based kingpin, had put them on the job, the police said.

11-year-old girl raped in Hyderabad, two arrested

HYDERABAD

A 11-year-old girl from Hyderabad was raped allegedly by a cab driver and his friend after offering her a free ride to her home. The incident took place on the night of May 31, the Moghalpura police said on Sunday. She was found by a police patrol unit the next morning. The police have arrested the driver, Shaik Kaleem, and his friend Mohammed Luqman for rape and related sections under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

Panic over second 'gas leak' in A.P. district

VISAKHAPATNAM

The alleged leakage of some gas for the second time at the Quantum Seeds, the second unit of Brandix India Apparel Company, caused panic at Atchutapuram in A.P. on Sunday. About 100 women employees had fallen sick after reportedly inhaling poisonous gas at the BIAC unit on June 3. "Brandix is an apparel company, and the possibility of poisonous gases leaking from it looks improbable," say sources. The cause of the leak has not yet been established.

DMS team begins probe into girl being forced to sell oocytes

It will visit hospitals in Erode and a few other districts and conduct inquiries

STAFF REPORTER
ERODE

A six-member team from the Directorate of Medical and Rural Health Services (DMS) held an inquiry for three hours here on Sunday with a 16-year-old girl who was allegedly forced to sell her oocytes to private hospitals through a forged Aadhaar card.

Four persons, including the girl's mother and her companion, were arrested last week.

A team, led by A. Viswanathan, Joint Director of Medical and Rural Health Services (ACTs), visited the government home at R.N. Pudur where the girl is lodged. The team includes M. Kamalakannan, Junior Administrative Officer; G.S. Gomathi, Joint Director of Health Services, Erode; and three doctors.

Statement recorded

Mr. Viswanathan told media persons that the girl's statement was recorded; based on it, the team would visit hospitals in Erode and a few other districts, conduct inquiries with their staff members and record their statements. The team would also verify the records related to the case. "Since the case has been registered under the POCSO Act, we cannot disclose further details," he said.

Asked what action would be taken against hospitals if they were in the wrong, he said their licences would be cancelled and if the role of doctors was established, action would be taken against them. Ponting out the Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) and Surrogacy Bills were passed to regulate In-vitro fertilization (IVF) centres and action will be taken accordingly.

The team is expected to visit a few private hospitals in Perundurai, Salem and Hosur in the next three days; thereafter, it would likely submit a report.

In her complaint to the Erode South police, the girl said her mother had separated from her father when she was three years old and had since been living with A. Syed Ali, 40. She said she was sexually assaulted by Syed Ali for five years. She was taken to hospitals where her oocytes had been sold eight times since 2017. Every time, her mother and Syed Ali received ₹20,000, while intermediary K. Malathi, 36, received ₹5,000 in commission.

A. John, 25, prepared a new Aadhaar card with a different name and 1995 as her year of birth for the purpose.

Rescued tiger to be released into the wild

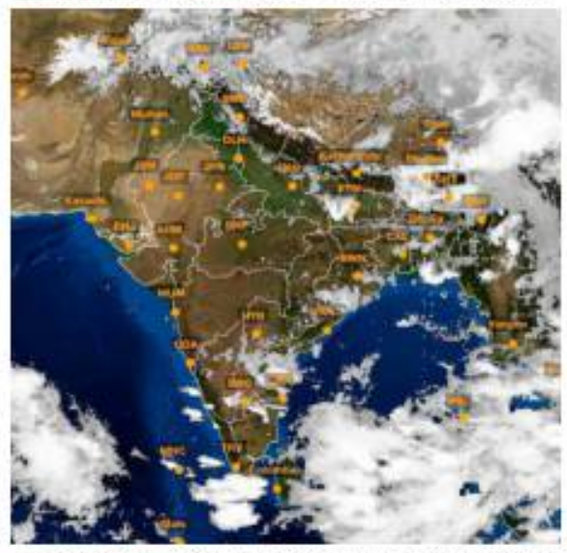
WILSON THOMAS
COIMBATORE

A tiger, which was rescued by the Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR) staff as a five-month-old cub from a tea estate near Valparai in September last year, was released into a large enclosure on Sunday as part of Tamil Nadu's first tiger rewilding programme.

The tiger, now aged around 13 months and weighing nearly 120 kg, was shifted from the cage to the open enclosure of 10,000 square feet at Manthirimattam in the core area of the ATR within the Manambolly forest range. The enclosure, with fencing, surveillance cameras and a watch tower, has facilities such as a den and watering hole.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 16.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places likely over Assam, Meghalaya, and heavy rainfall at isolated places over West Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, South Interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal. Heat wave condition in isolated places likely over south Punjab, south Haryana, Delhi, south Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	24.0	34.3	27.7	Kozhikode	–	34.8	27.5
Ahmedabad	–	42.5	27.0	Kurnool	–	40.4	28.8
Aizawl	14.0	26.4	20.4	Lucknow	–	42.3	28.5
Allahabad	–	46.0	27.8	Madurai	–	39.7	27.3
Bengaluru	4.4	32.5	20.6	Mangaluru	–	32.2	24.4
Bhopal	–	43.8	29.3	Mumbai	–	34.0	26.6
Bhubaneswar	17.0	33.8	22.9	Mysuru	2.0	33.0	20.0
Chandigarh	–	44.5	25.9	New Delhi	–	44.0	23.8
Chennai	–	40.3	28.5	Patna	–	38.8	26.0
Coimbatore	–	35.2	25.0	Port Blair	19.0	26.5	22.8
Dehradun	–	41.6	22.2	Puducherry	–	37.0	27.3
Gangtok	2.6	19.1	17.8	Pune	–	39.1	24.2
Goa	–	34.0	26.5	Raipur	–	46.5	27.5
Guwahati	31.0	29.2	24.6	Ranchi	–	38.4	24.2
Hubballi	–	33.0	23.0	Shillong	9.0	20.1	17.1
Hyderabad	–	41.9	26.7	Shimla	–	28.5	19.8
Imphal	–	31.0	21.7	Srinagar	–	30.7	13.8
Jaipur	–	42.6	31.6	Thiruvananthapuram	0.5	31.6	26.3
Kochi	7.0	30.8	25.4	Tiruchi	–	38.7	28.4
Kohima	2.0	24.6	16.6	Vijayawada	–	40.4	29.8
Kolkata	0.6	35.1	27.3	Visakhapatnam	–	33.4	29.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing — Yesterday

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	11	12	–	284	255	
Bengaluru	7	–	46	54	115	
Chennai	15	9	62	–	31	
Delhi	18	140	15	182	348	
Hyderabad	23	17	32	44	41	
Kolkata	14	13	17	73	109	
Lucknow	6	72	52	274	236	
Mumbai	14	–	40	10	78	
Pune	115	26	69	121	82	
Visakhapatnam	17	24	15	45	76	

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Faridabad, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 291 indicating a poor level of pollution. In contrast, Gangtok, Sikkim recorded a healthy AQI score of 26.

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Bommai to chair meet in Mysuru on June 8

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MYSURU

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Mysuru to participate in the country's main event of International Day of Yoga on June 21, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai will come to Mysuru on June 8 to review preparations done by the district administration for the event which is being held on the premises of Mysuru Palace.

Speaking to reporters after inspecting a yoga session in the run-up to the upcoming mega Yoga Day celebrations, at the palace, Minister incharge of Mysuru district S.T. Somashekar said that yoga rehearsals had been planned on June 5 and June 12 in view of the Prime Minister's visit. The city's yoga enthusiasts will perform yoga on the next Sunday and thereafter, a decision will be taken on the participants to be accommodated inside the palace during the main event, he added.

Yoga enthusiasts during the rehearsal in the run-up to the main event of International Day of Yoga-2022 scheduled for June 21, at the palace in Mysuru on Sunday. •M.A. SRIRAM

Mr. Somashekar said that the Chief Minister is visiting Mysuru on June 8 and a clear picture on the assemblage will be known, after his meeting with the officials. So far, registration for the main event has not started but efforts are being made to accommodate the people from all walks of life. "Around 15,000 may be allowed to perform yoga at the palace. They include 12,000 identified by the State government and 3,000 identified by the Centre. We have information that the venue can accommodate around 15,000 and the finer details were yet to be made available. But, no final decision has been taken on the numbers so far. Clarity on the number of participants may be available after the CM's meeting," the Minister replied.

Sri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Swami of Avadhoota Datta Peeta, MLAs S.A. Ramdas, L Nagendra, Mayor Sundanda Palanetra and others were present. Around 21,000 yoga enthusiasts took part in Sunday's rehearsal at the palace, according to the Minister.

A few days ago, Deputy Commissioner Bagadi Gautham, Commissioner of Police Chandragupta and senior officials from the Ministry of Ayush conducted a preliminary meeting in connection with the main event.

Vikram Singh, Director, Ministry of Ayush, who was present, visited the venue and collected details on the preparations made so far for the event, from officials.

In this meeting, it was discussed that the crowd of 12,000 people including school students, police personnel, pourakarmikas, differently abled, transgenders and people from various walks of life will be part of the yoga day event.

The yoga day is being held at 75 iconic places and the palace was chosen in Mysuru, which is an iconic site, and the event will be televised live from across all the locations, in view of the 75th year of independence.

As Mysuru is described as a yoga hub, many practitioners here claim that yoga has helped boost tourism in Mysuru as it ensured more footfalls to Mysuru, a most-sought after destination in the southern circuit, benefiting the local economy, especially the hospitality industry.

Many PG accommodations have come up to house these visitors, giving employment to the locals.

Murky waters

The water in the Hussain Sagar lake in Hyderabad is giving out a stinking smell posing serious health hazard to the citizens of Hyderabad on Sunday. •G. RAMAKRISHNA

Freak weather hits cashew farmers

Rise in temperature, erratic rainfall is affecting fruit-setting process in Kerala

NAVAMY SUDHISH
KOLLAM

Though the Kerala government has launched a string of projects to promote cashew cultivation, climate change is emerging as a serious threat to farmers.

Rise in temperature and erratic rainfall are affecting the fruit-setting process, leading to huge losses.

Cashew growers in Kannur and Kasaragod districts produce the largest volume of raw cashew nut in the State and this year they were unable to get a good yield.

"Climate change has affected the flowering and fruiting of the crop, resulting in a grim harvest. A harsh summer caused the flowers to dry up and unseasonal rain damaged the rest. The crop is highly vulnerable to the change in climate conditions and the nuts harvested after heavy rain will not have much market value. Though we had faced climate-related issues earlier, this time we were hit hard," says Siju, a farmer.

Serious impact: With a drastic dip in harvest, cashew factories are forced to depend on imports. •C. SURESHKUMAR

Many takers

Raw nuts procured from domestic farmers are considered first-rate and these often fetch a higher price compared to the nuts imported from African countries such as Ghana and Ivory Coast. "It tastes better and the demand is always high, but this year, the produce was not available on market even in small quantities. The production very was marginal," says R. Salim, a trader.

The season between March and June is very important to all cashew-growing States, including Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha. "If the fallen nuts are damaged by the rains, there will not be any takers," he adds.

In order to help growers and avoid exploitation by middlemen, the State government had launched an intensive procurement drive. However, the procurement was negligible due to the unprecedented dip in production.

"Last year, we procured around 3,000 tonnes of raw nut locally. The raw nut output from the Aralam farm, a consistent supplier, used to be around 400 tonnes. This season the production is less than 10 tonnes," says S. Jayamohan, chairman, Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation.

Usually, factories function with locally produced raw nut during pre-Onam season, but this year they had to depend on imports.

Kerala to seek legal advice on ESZ order

STAFF REPORTER
KANNUR

Kerala Forest Minister A.K. Saseendran has said that the government will seek legal advice from experts on the Supreme Court directive to maintain a minimum Ecologically Sensitive Zone (ESZ) of 1 km for all protected forests. He reiterated that the order may hit Kerala hard.

He said that there are 23 populated areas adjoining the forest fringes. The order came when the approval for 0.5-km ECZ was about to be given to 20 of these places after the government submitted all the information required to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. "The order has come as a shock," he said.

After SC order, eco zones to be redrawn

Public resistance had led to their wiping out in many protected areas in Kerala

K.S. SUDHI
KOCHI

The Ecological Sensitive Zones (ESZ) of at least 10 protected areas of Kerala, which were marked as zero following massive public resistance, will have to be extended to at least one kilometre following the Supreme Court order.

Data with the Forest department indicated that the ESZs of the wildlife sanctuaries of Idukki, Malabar, Kottiyoor, Wayanad, Neyyar-Peppara and Peechi-Vazhani, the Parambikulam and Periyar tiger reserves, the Chulannur peafowl sanctuary and the Thattekkad bird sanctuary that will have to be revised. In the case of the Periyar tiger reserve, the ESZ was zero in the north, north-east and eastern boundaries whereas it was 0.025 km to one km in its south-east, south, south-west, west and north-west boundaries. Justifying the demarcation, it said that the north and north-east region of the reserve shared the forest boundaries of the Meghamalai wildlife sanctuary, Srivilliputhur giant squirrel sanctuary and the Tirunelveli Forest division of Tamil Nadu and hence the ESZ was zero in those directions.

The Ecological Sensitive Zone of the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve will be revised. •FILE PHOTO

In the case of the north-western boundary, the area was surrounded by continuous stretches of human habitations. The townships, spread over around 30 sq km, have had commercial and domestic establishments for over 40 years.

Kumily, an international tourist destination and a commercial centre, is also the entry point to Kerala from Tamil Nadu.

Tribal settlements

A large extent of human habitations existed in the western boundary of the core area of the Parambikulam tiger reserve. There are also six tribal settlements in the area, forcing the authorities to go for zero ESZ.

The ESZ in the south-west and western region of the Wayanad sanctuary, which was packed with human habitations and farmland, was recorded as zero following massive public agitation.

In Idukki, the ESZ was zero in some boundaries where agricultural lands and houses were located.

Sweeping changes ends uncertainty for these teachers

They are unhappy at being redeployed, but welcome perks

R.K. ROSHNI
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

M. Salam taught at the same multi-grade learning centre (MGLC) or single-teacher school at Edavanna in Malappuram for half his 50 years. This month, he joined duty at Government Vocational Higher Secondary School, Kizhuparambu, near Areekode, in the full-time menial grade, that is as sweeper.

With the government deciding to phase out MGLCs, less than 10 of the 270 MGLCs remain open. The rest have been closed down and the children shifted to nearby schools or tribal hostels. Most of the 344 teachers (called Vidya volunteers) who taught in these schools for honorarium have been redeployed as part-time contingent menial/full-time menial after taking their consent.

The Vidya volunteers acknowledge that taking up work as a sweeper after teaching young children for years is not easy.

However, many are happy that they have been taken into government service. Most of them are not qualified to be primary school teachers.

"For sure, the nature of our new job is different, but at least we will get our salaries on time. Also, those volunteers who are qualified can try for better opportunities," says R. Shemi, a Vidya volunteer. Another teacher, Anil Kumar, from Kasaragod says they did not get any TA/DA either. "In the sweeper grade, we fall in the ₹23,000-₹50,200 salary bracket, which is more than what we used to get, and are entitled to benefits such as provident fund, and TA/DA."

Their future was always a question mark, the teachers point out. Any attempt to appoint them to a higher post would end up in courts as PSC rank-holders were waiting in the wings.

"There was no other go. Considering the years of service we have put in as Vidya volunteers, the government did well to consider the matter favourably," they say.

Message from voters

Chief Ministers of Odisha and Uttarakhand have been strengthened by the bypoll results

It is not often that by-elections are of any significant consequence. But Uttarakhand, where the Chief Minister was in a do-or-die battle; Kerala, where the main Opposition, the Congress, was fighting for survival; and Odisha, where the ruling party was seeking another vote of confidence; all saw high-stakes contests. An impressive victory in the Thrikkakara Assembly by-election has revived the Congress in Kerala from the slumber and the chaos that had gripped the party following two consecutive Assembly election defeats, in 2016 and 2021. The seat is a Congress stronghold that stayed with the party even in 2021, when the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) won 99 of the 140 seats. The seat had fallen vacant following the demise of P.T. Thomas, who had shown great courage to stand up to the Catholic Church on issues of public policy. His wife Uma Thomas was the Congress candidate. The LDF was criticised on grounds that it sought to align its selection of candidate and campaign with the wishes of the Church. The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) also turned the election into a referendum on the Silver Line semi-high speed railway project that the Pinarayi Vijayan government was championing. The victory, by an increased margin in comparison with 2021, reinforces the leadership of V.D. Satheesan, the leader of Opposition, and K. Sudhakaran, the President of the Congress State unit. The CPI(M) and the LDF must take the lessons from the results with humility and appropriately recalibrate their positions.

In Odisha's Brajarajnagar Assembly constituency, the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) candidate, Alaka Mohanty, won by a margin of 66,122 votes, defeating the Congress that pushed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to the third position. The bypoll was necessitated by the death of the winner's husband Kishore Mohanty. The result has further strengthened the hands of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, who revamped his Council of Ministers immediately after the victory. The BJP that has been nurturing ambitions to replace the BJD in the State had to eat humble pie in the seat, though it is part of the Bargarh Parliamentary Constituency which it had won in 2019. In 2024, Mr. Patnaik will be on his way to becoming one of the longest serving Chief Ministers. In Uttarakhand, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami won the Champawat Assembly seat as expected, tightening his grip over the party. The BJP has been going through a churn in the State, leading to the elevation of Mr. Dhami who was not an MLA, after the Assembly elections in February-March. But the path ahead will depend on how smartly Mr. Dhami navigates the dangerous roads in the hill State's politics.

Boost for boosters

With the approval of Corbevax as a booster dose, India will have a heterologous shot

With the Indian drug regulator greenlighting Corbevax as a booster dose for all adults above 18 years who have received two doses of either Covishield or Covaxin as part of primary vaccination, a heterologous booster shot has come a step closer to being administered to people. Though booster shots have been administered since January 10 beginning with health-care and frontline workers, and people over 60 with comorbidities, India has been using the same vaccine for both primary vaccination and booster (homologous boosting). In clinical trials, a booster dose using a vaccine that is different from the one used for primary vaccination – technically called heterologous boosting – produced higher immune responses when compared with a same vaccine for primary and booster vaccination. A trial by the Christian Medical College, Vellore, too found the same result. As expected, Bio E's phase-3 heterologous booster vaccine trial using Corbevax in people who have received two doses of either Covaxin or Covishield did produce significantly higher immune responses. But with the control group not receiving a homologous booster shot but only a placebo, the trial failed to bring out the enhanced immune responses by using Corbevax as a heterologous booster. Any vaccine administered as a booster – immaterial of being homologous or heterologous – months after primary vaccination will, by default, increase the immune responses. The trial has thus only shown that Corbevax as a heterologous booster increases the immune responses but failed to show that heterologous boosting with this vaccine produces superior immune responses than homologous boosting with Covishield or Covaxin. It is all the more surprising that the booster trial used a placebo for the control arm as even the phase-3 clinical trial to study the immunogenicity of Corbevax for primary vaccination used the comparator vaccine Covishield for the control group.

With Corbevax being approved as a heterologous booster based on a poorly designed heterologous booster trial, the drug regulator can be expected to soon greenlight Covishield and Covaxin as heterologous boosters based on the results of the CMC Vellore trial. Especially as the trial clearly demonstrated the advantages of heterologous boosting compared with using the same vaccine for primary vaccination and boosting. While the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) is quite likely to approve Corbevax as a heterologous booster shot without much delay, it remains to be seen whether it greenlights it for all adults above 18 years. Given the greater likelihood of NTAGI approving Corbevax as a heterologous booster, the Government is not likely to side step the expert group, as in mid-March. As booster shots have been rolled out for all adults above 18 years, the Government should not hurry to approve Corbevax without NTAGI's nod.

The IPEF holds promise but there are perils too

The U.S. has been carefully constructing the framework and India, despite endorsing it, needs to be wary of hurdles

BISWAJIT DHAR

On May 23, the Joe Biden administration took a significant step to turn the clock back to the Obama Presidency by launching its own version of a "pivot to Asia" through the establishment of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) with other partner countries – Australia, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the United States. Within days of its launch, IPEF expanded its membership to the Pacific Island states, with Fiji joining the initiative.

An American initiative to bring together its allies in the Indo-Pacific region to enhance economic cooperation is bound to lead to comparisons with one of former U.S. President Barack Obama's pet projects, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which was spiked by Donald Trump immediately after he took over the reins in Washington. The IPEF reignites the twin ambitions of the U.S. to provide economic leadership and to challenge China's hegemony in the region.

A tag that fits

The U.S. Trade Administration had touted the TPP as "Made in America" (https://bit.ly/3MT7KA6), a tag that seems equally appropriate for the IPEF. At its launch, the IPEF was proposed as an elaborate framework of rules covering four pillars, namely, fair and resilient trade, supply chain resiliency, clean energy decarbonisation, and tax and anti-corruption. It is not clear whether the original signatories to the IPEF were fully in the know of the details that were unveiled at the launch of the initiative, for there is no record of any prior discussion. However, evidence is available that suggests that Washington has been carefully constructing the framework ever since President Biden had first spoken about it in October 2021 during the East Asia Summit, in the presence of all IPEF signatories except Fiji.

Following its usual process of coalescing the views of all major business interests and the political establishment, the Biden administration sought public comments in March from "interested parties" on the four pillars to assist its trade administration for developing the U.S.'s position in IPEF negotiations. Not surprisingly, major corporations, including Google, Microsoft, IBM, Intel and Cargill and influential industry associations such as the Biotechnology Innovation Organization and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) responded to the call. The IPEF was also discussed in considerable detail in the U.S. Congress, a process that is vitally important to secure bipartisan support for the Biden administration to conduct negotiations to translate the framework into reality.

On IPRs

The Biden administration has announced that under the "fair and resilient trade" pillar, it "aims to develop high-standard, worker-centered commitments" covering labour rights, the environment and climate, the digital economy, agriculture, transparency and good regulatory practices, competition policy and trade facilitation. The clear focus of this agenda is to focus on issues which the U.S. considers vital to further its interests. One notable exclusion from this list is intellectual property rights (IPRs) that have generally been at the heart of the U.S.' economic engagements with its partner countries. One possible reason for excluding IPRs could be that these are seen as the major reason why only 16.2% of people in low-income countries have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine until today. But with several corporations, including those from the pharmaceutical and electronics sectors, and members of the Congress making a strong pitch for their inclusion, IPRs could soon figure in the IPEF negotiations.

REUTERS

Promoting "fair and resilient trade" defines the U.S.'s agenda on trade, side-stepping its pursuit of the free trade ideal. The reason behind this shift could be that for most IPEF signatories, import tariffs are passé. Only four of the 14 signatories have average tariffs in double digits. The U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Gina M. Raimondo has, thus, affirmed that the IPEF is "intentionally designed not to be a same old... traditional trade agreement" (https://bit.ly/3tipOMd). The primary objective of the IPEF is to ensure a high degree of regulatory coherence and to make market access contingent upon realisation of regulatory standards. It must be pointed out that standards and regulations in most developed countries often create discretionary/discriminatory barriers to trade and overcoming these barriers is usually beyond the capacities, both institutional and otherwise, of lesser developed countries.

Contentious issues

Two contentious issues that are generally included in free trade agreements (FTAs) involving the U.S., namely, labour rights and the environment and climate change, are duly included in the IPEF. Enforcement of labour rights using trade rules is quite contentious, having been rejected by the members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) on several occasions. WTO members had arrived at a consensus that the "internationally recognized core labour standards" of the International Labour Organization (ILO) should be used to deal with issues pertaining to labour rights. They had also rejected the use of labour standards for protectionist purposes.

As regards the environment, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) had cautioned that "measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade" (https://bit.ly/3as4BZz). The IPEF could threaten abrogation of these decisions at the WTO and the UNFCCC.

Data portability

A third set of issues, whose ramifications on the future of the digital economy and beyond can be far reaching, are those related to standards on cross-border data flows and data localisations. Control over data, the driver of the digital economy, will increasingly determine the dynamics of economies, and hence the issue of data portability assumes critical importance.

Although China was not mentioned at the official launch of the IPEF, possibly for diplomatic reasons, the second largest economy has been at the centre of Washington's strategies for the Indo-Pacific, especially with regard to supply chains. However, the crux of the American narrative on this issue is the hope that U.S. manufacturing giants, most of which have made China their preferred production bases at least since the 1990s, would move to the other countries in the Indo-Pacific. But even if these corporations move to countries other than China, how can the U.S. ensure supply chain resilience?

What New Delhi has to watch

What could India expect from the IPEF? While endorsing the IPEF, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had spoken of India's aspiration to participate more substantially in the supply chains in the region. However, this would have its challenges. For instance, while addressing the needs of the digital economy, the U.S. has emphasised the importance of "high-standard rules... on cross-border data flows and data localization" (https://bit.ly/3xb0M2G). On this issue of data localisation, the Government of India has not yet taken a clear position. In 2019, its likely preference was revealed in the Draft National e-Commerce Policy, wherein it had backed restrictions on cross-border data flows. The key challenge for India is to sustain this diametrically opposite view to an uncompromising position of the U.S. on data localisation.

India should also be wary of the considerable emphasis that is being given to strengthening labour rights in the on-going discussions on the IPEF, both by corporate interests and members of the Congress. In a Senate Finance Committee hearing in April, Elizabeth Warren, one of the more vocal voices among the Democrats extolled the United States Trade Representative, Katherine Tai, who would be leading the discussions on the "fair and resilient trade" for "incorporating strong, enforceable labor and environment standards to demonstrate [the U.S.s'] commitment to the importance of these areas in [the U.S.'s] competitiveness and in our terms of trade (https://bit.ly/3tcUMFp). How would India's preference for a "flexible labour market" gel with the regime that the U.S. is proposing for the IPEF?

Biswajit Dhar is Professor, Centre of Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Modinomics and the long distance to the finish line

The Indian economy needs a new economic policy that has clear objectives unlike the incoherent announcements now

SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY

On May 31, 2022, in its press note on provisional estimates on national income, the National Statistical Office (NSO) released the 2021-22 fourth quarter GDP growth rate figure at 4.1% (April 1-March 31, 2022 in annual equivalent terms) compared to fourth quarter figures for the previous year, 2020-21.

In the first quarter of 2020-21 (April 1 to June 30), GDP growth rate according to the NSO, was -23.8% ,which is when the COVID-19 pandemic began spreading.

The combined subsequent and remaining three quarters of 2021-22 annualised growth rate was negative, and thus for the fiscal year of four quarters, the GDP annual 2020-21 was placed at -4.8%.

Points to note

The following two conclusions are important to the Narendra Modi government for a badly needed reality check. First, which I have detailed in my earlier Opinion articles in *The Hindu* is that the Indian economy had been declining in growth rate since 2016 and fell below what was earlier sneeringly referred to by economists in the Congress-ruled period (1950-77) as "The Hindu Rate of Growth" of 3.5%-4% per year growth rate in GDP.

Second, the Modi government should recognise that during the present Prime Minister's tenure since 2014, his plan for "Vikas" is more genuinely akin to the Hindu rate of growth planning of Jawaharlal Nehru. No P.V. Narasimha Rao tenure type structural reforms were systematically implemented. The decline in GDP growth rate from 2016 till today is thus a national shame for a dispensation that claims to bring "Vikas" to the country.

Not only has the growth rate of GDP been consistently declining since 2016 but the brazen but rosy predictions that were impossible to achieve without major reforms, such as a $5 trillion GDP by 2024-25, have been publicised in the media, (which in 2019, when Mr. Modi announced the goal, meant a 14.8% per year growth rate in GDP).

I am prepared to debate publicly with any Government official to prove to the Indian public that "Modinomics" to date is a gigantic failure. That is, to prove that no announced macroeconomic goal has been achieved during the Modi tenure as Prime Minister so far from 2014 till date.

What is needed

What the Indian economy needs today is a new economic policy that is based on clearly stated objective targets, priorities, a strategy to achieve the targets, and an intelligent and transparent resource mobilisation plan. At present we have an incoherent hotchpotch set of public announcements, with no accountability or logic.

The Atal Bihari Vajpayee government lost badly in 2004 despite the confidence in advancing the general election by six months before the due date because of the imaginary paradise of "India Shining". The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) could not make an electoral comeback for 10 years after the debacle in the 2004 elections.

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

The BJP was lucky to come back in 2014 because of the Supreme Court judgments cancelling the 2G Spectrum licences, hopes of Ram Mandir re-building, and a failing economy.

Democracy's dynamics

Today, the BJP is in its eighth year of its tenure as the ruling party. Although some socio-religious successes have helped to raise the morale of party workers, the 2024 general election is still not a done deal. State elections in West Bengal and Punjab are also not good omens. In the recent elections in Uttar Pradesh, the margins of victory were mostly very narrow. My own reading is that economic failure, which is fast becoming the main issue, could drastically unsettle even the most conservative forecast in 2024. Democracy could be threatened by desperate political extremists.

In every nation, democracy is structured on four pillars: electoral legitimacy, constitutional safeguards, functionally independent institutions, and embedded accountability. Mere elections are not sufficient for a democracy.

But there is a conflict between the market and democracy that requires to be resolved: a flourishing and vibrant democracy that empowers a relatively poor uncorrupted majority to vote, and hence can influence legislation against the relatively rich capitalist and entrepreneurial minority, and a thriving market economy driven by a rich empowered minority with disproportionate access to capital, skills and media and other networks has the capacity to undermine the electoral system through strategic funding of the same.

Therefore, there is a need to understand the dynamics of democracy especially since, in India, even economic reformers such as Narasimha Rao have so far lost elections.

Thus, designing reforms is most important because leaders initiating reforms must win elections. Let us understand how a democratic Japan came to have such an opaque financial system with no prudential norms or accountability because of cronyism that had to be pleased, or how the United States that had no proper regulation in place for the new sophisticated financial products gave free play to so much greed that it led to the global financial crisis in 2007-09.

Economic reforms in a democracy can be electorally successful if so designed that the losers from it (usually touts who organise quotas and licences for the rich for a price, and who, because de-regulations implicit in reforms make them immediately lose the "rent") do not hijack the election, while the unorganised poor who cannot see early returns from reforms are kept satisfied by reducing unemployment and controlling galloping inflation.

Deregulations should also not mean that we reject government intervention for safety nets, affirmative action, market failure and creating a level-playing field.

Empower institutions

Democratic institutions have to be empowered to guard against public disorder arising from rapid deregulation, as it happened in Russia, post-1991. The Russians underwent chaos and misery. Thus, dictatorship has returned for the Russians.

Thus, the trade-offs as between public order and de-regulation, through affirmative action, social security and a safety net, are essential to create a stake for the poor in the system, levelling the playing field to create hope, ensure transparency, accountability, and trusteeship (philanthropy) as also corporate governance to legitimise profit making that drives the market system.

Market systems are not a free-for-all. It is capitalism with rules of transactions. With that proviso, market system capitalism works since the principal driver is capital and its deployment for innovation to raise productivity.

Subramanian Swamy is a former Union Minister and a six-term Member of Parliament

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Adding to the trauma

It is most unfortunate and an unpardonable act by BJP MLA Raghunandan Rao to politicise the heinous crime in Hyderabad of the gang-rape of a minor in Hyderabad's Jubilee Hills (Page 1, "Hyderabad gang-rape: BJP MLA shares video", June 5). The MLA should have, at the most, handed over the evidence to the police in a sealed cover and assisted them in their investigations. The survivor is undergoing severe trauma and the circulation of private pictures and video clips will only compound her agony.

K. NEHRU PATNAIK,
Visakhapatnam

In very poor taste

The objectification of women, especially in the context of the distressing incident in Hyderabad of the gang-rape of a minor, needs to be stopped (Inside pages, "YouTube, Twitter told to take down ad", June 5). It is sickening that such content like the deodarant advertisement was allowed in the first place. Platforms such as social media and television are accessed by almost every age group. The impact of such advertising on young minds cannot be imagined. There needs to be a code of ethics in place.

MANOJ KUMAR JENA,
Cuttack, Odisha

■ The content of the now suspended advertisement was in very bad taste and would have fuelled atrocities. It is high time that the authorities concerned ensure that such disgusting advertisements are never aired; such content has the ability to psychologically influence and even cause real-life crimes. At a time when crimes against women show no signs of abating, problem content must be nipped in the bud. When there are a thousand subjects and ideas available to create tasteful advertisements, how do the content directors come up with cheap ideas? It is a good sign that there was backlash. People are vigilant.

M. PRADYU,
Thalikavu, Kannur, Kerala

At the French Open

Iga Swiatek was just too good for her young opponent, Coco Gauff ('Sport' page. "Swiatek brushes aside Gauff, clinches second title at Roland-Garros", June 5). Given her current form, Swiatek is well on course to topple more records and script a glorious chapter in women's tennis.

N.J. RAVI CHANDER,
Bengaluru

■ The dominance of Swiatek was easily discernible. Gauff had hardly a clue on how to tackle Swiatek's power and precision that was in full display. There is no doubt that considering her talent, Swiatek is a champion in the making.

V. LAKSHMANAN,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

People, not courts, shape norms

What healthy democracies need are ongoing processes of democratic deliberations among citizens

ARUN MAIRA

AFP

The BJP's leadership says that disputes about mosques, temples and rights to worship, which are tearing up Indian society, will be settled by courts according to the Constitution. Pew Research Center surveys and the Global State of Democracy Report, 2021, reveal that two-thirds of citizens in democratic countries, including the U.S., do not trust institutions such as elected assemblies and courts to represent their will. Another horrific assassination of school children in the U.S. has caused the U.S. President to throw up his hands. The U.S. Senate is divided, and the Supreme Court continues to refer to the Second Amendment of the Constitution to disallow any dilution of a fundamental right of citizens to bear arms. The looming possibility of the U.S. Supreme Court denying women their rights to reproductive health is dividing the U.S. further. In India, laws regarding citizenship and sedition are being used to curb the fundamental rights of citizens and are being contested in the courts.

The U.S. and India are democracies founded on written Constitutions, which state the democratic principles adopted by 'We, the People' living within the geographical boundaries of these countries. The Constitutions define the institutions which are required to maintain democracy – principally elected assemblies and independent courts.

Conceptions change with time

The U.S. and India must lead the spread of democracy around the world, U.S. President Joe Biden declared at the Quad summit, to contain threats from China's and Russia's authoritarian governments. Both India and the U.S. need to put their own democracies in order. The leaked draft judgment by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito regarding women's rights to abortion for reproductive health highlights the fundamental problems of democratic governance in all constitutional democracies, including India.

The draft raises questions about conceptions of human rights. How are concepts of human rights formed? Which institutions have the constitutional rights to enforce them? Justice Alito says the fundamental question before the court must be answered systematically in steps. One, whether the reference to 'liberty"' in the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protects a particular right; two, whether the right at issue in this case is rooted in the nation's history and tradition; three, whether it is an essential component of 'ordered liberty'; four, whether a right to obtain an abortion is supported by other precedents.

Conceptions of 'freedom', 'liberty' and 'human rights' are not cast in stone. They are always works in progress. All citizens were not granted equal rights in the U.S. Constitution in 1787: women and coloured people obtained these rights later; and people of various genders have begun to be treated equally only in this century. These new rights, not explicitly mentioned in the U.S. Constitution, have emerged with struggles, from an ongoing civilisational dialogue.

The Alito draft explains why courts and elected assemblies find it difficult to determine the will of the people. "We all declare for liberty; but in using the same word, we do not mean the same thing," Abraham Lincoln had said in 1864. Moreover, written constitutions, which courts must follow, state what the will of the people was at some prior time in history. The will of the people changes as ideas of human rights and liberties evolve. Therefore, good democratic governance requires a robust process for those who govern the people to continuously listen to the people. Also, the people must listen to each other; people 'like us' must listen to 'people not like us' for consensus on what 'We, the People' want, which is the foundation of all democracies.

Citizens want many things and may not agree about everything. The Arrow Impossibility Theorem, propounded by the economist Kenneth Arrow, is a fundamental dilemma in social choice theory. The Impossibility Theorem proves that there is no voting method in which voters, by merely expressing their votes as 'yes' or 'no', can produce a unanimous outcome, no matter how many rounds of votes there are. The mathematical problem here is that individual voters' preferences cannot be sliced and diced; nor can the choices before them be made too simply as 'this' or 'that' to enable easy voting and counting (as done in referendums such as Brexit).

Human beings' preferences are formed by combinations of many factors in their histories and their present circumstances; also, by what they value most, which may not be the same as other citizens. Therefore, their preference for a candidate in an election to represent them cannot reveal their consensus about fundamental needs. Outcomes of elections in first-past-the-post systems make the reading of the tea leaves even harder, when candidates, who do not even represent an electoral majority, win.

Democracy is a process of 'ordered liberty'. It requires institutions to enable the will of the people to be implemented with checks and balances amongst them. Elected assemblies and independent courts are institutions for governance of the people. Constitutions lay down their powers. Neither must usurp the other's powers. Justice Alito fears that the U.S. Supreme Court has transgressed the role of elected state assemblies. This is also a criticism of the Indian Supreme Court when it is spurred to act by public interest litigations.

Preserving democracy

Institutions are the means with which societies realise their aspirations. Constitutions, courts, elections, and assemblies are not all that a democracy needs to function. Institutions, Nobel Laureate Douglass North explained, are not merely constitutionally designed organisations; social norms are the fundamental drivers of institutions. Genuine democracy is government of the people by the people. People, not courts, shape the norms.

Democracies live outside courts and elected assemblies. People who belong to different political factions, practice different religions, and have different histories within the history of their nation must listen to each other and learn to live democratically together. Therefore, what healthy democracies need most of all are ongoing processes of democratic deliberations among citizens.

The right to freedom of speech is cited as a fundamental right in a democracy. Therefore, no one, not even the government, should curb the right of anyone else to say what they wish to. Technology was expected to provide solutions by enabling everyone to participate in debates about what matters to all. However, social media has resulted in a cacophony of voices and more divisions. Governments and courts in democracies are struggling to rein in social media democratically.

India's beauty is its diversity. Democracy's essence is the right of diverse people to live as equals. Citizens have rights in democracies. They have responsibilities too. While democracies must give every citizen the right to speak, democratic citizens have responsibilities to listen to others' views too. The design of democratic institutions has so far concentrated on vertical structures, for upward representation and downward governance. To preserve democracy in this century, reformers should focus on designing lateral processes for democratic deliberation amongst citizens, founded on the discipline of listening to 'people not like us'.

Arun Maira is author of Listening for Well-Being: Conversations With People Not Like Us

The faults in tennis

The power struggles are partly due to the lack of a cohesive organisational structure

PREETHI RAMAMOORTHY

Even as a real war rages on, tennis seems to be at war with itself. The recent Wimbledon row has opened a wide fissure in an already fractured sport. The removal of ranking points at Wimbledon by tennis tour operators is a scalding rebuke to the intransigence displayed by the oldest Slam in banning Russian and Belarusian players. Reports have now emerged that the All England Club is likely to take the issue to court. Such a move would bring to a boil a deep-rooted disharmony that sits at the very core of the sport.

As political experts grapple over moral questions of whether citizens (in this case, players) should be punished for the actions of a state, tennis fans are left to wonder whether this fiasco could have been avoided if only there was better communication.

The fiefdoms in an empire

Infighting is not new in tennis. Players and tournament organisers have constantly disagreed over issues such as prize money and playing schedules. But there are battles constantly waged within the upper echelons too. The power struggles are partly due to the lack of a cohesive organisational structure. Instead of one overarching governing body, there are seven predominant powers: the International Tennis Federation (ITF); the ATP (for men) and WTA (women); and the four Grand Slams.

And there exist other fiefdoms in this sprawling empire, like national tennis federations, which can wield power at will. Each has its own interests to fulfil and, in the case of Wimbledon, archaic traditions to preserve. Communication channels between them have been awkward at best and combative at worst. As former ATP chairman Etienne de Villiers once said, "Everyone distrusts everyone else."

The Majors have a history of acting unilaterally, without consulting the tours or the players. The most recent example of this played out in 2020 in the midst of the pandemic, at a time when organisers and stakeholders were expected to work together. The French Tennis Federation decided to postpone the French Open from the usual May-June schedule to October, merely two weeks after the U.S. Open, without consulting the other Slams or tours. Players were thrust into a chaotic autumn season. It was a case of one body singularly turning the tennis calendar on its head.

There have been rare cases of the Slams putting on a united front too. When former World No. 1 Naomi Osaka decided to boycott press conferences at Roland-Garros last year, the Grand Slam organisers came down on her, warning her of fines and suspensions. That the decision was taken to protect their own purses is another matter.

The ATP and WTA too have run solo at several junctures. Most notably, when tennis star Peng Shuai disappeared after making explosive sexual assault revelations against Chinese Communist Party officials, the ATP expressed concern but stopped short of joining the WTA in suspending tournaments in China. Ideas to merge the tours, as floated by the likes of Roger Federer and Billie Jean King, never came to fruition.

Fighting the good fight

At this point, when the Russia-Ukraine conflict shows no signs of ceasing, the powers that be in tennis find themselves faced with a question: how do you convince the world that you are fighting the good fight, especially when there is little evidence to prove that measures like sporting sanctions do anything at all to affect the war? The question is especially pertinent in tennis, where patriotic sentiments rarely exert any influence and fans are drawn to players less because of the boxed flag next to their name and more because of how they play the game and carry themselves on and off the court.

Staying in synchrony could be a possible first step. Reuters reported in 2021 that a 'T7 working group' involving the seven governing bodies was established to examine areas such as a unified calendar, shared commercial offerings, sponsorships and TV deals. The fact that such a grouping exists is an accomplishment in itself, but there is no better time to invigorate it than now. Apart from trying to just fix the economics of the sport, the group would do well to focus on other pressing matters too.

Perhaps what tennis also needs is one director or commissioner who can solicit feedback from all stakeholders and put forth a plan of action during a crisis like the one it is facing now.

The foundation of tennis was laid more than a century ago. The sport has always prided itself as being progressive. The with-us-or-against-us stance maintained by the top order only pushes it backward. What it needs now is more collaboration and less rancour. As Centre Court at SW19 celebrates its centenary year at the current residence, the drama should strictly be on court.

Preethi Ramamoorthy, formerly with The Hindu, is a journalist based in Bengaluru

STATE OF PLAY

Spat and rapprochement

The BJP-AIADMK relationship in Tamil Nadu has been going through a rough patch

T. RAMAKRISHNAN

The recent spat between the AIADMK and the BJP regarding who the "effective and principal" Opposition party in Tamil Nadu is has again brought to the fore their uneasy relationship. The two parties parted ways in late January over the issue of seat-sharing in the polls to the urban local bodies. Yet, AIADMK coordinator O. Panneerselvam and co-coordinator Edappadi K. Palaniswami have maintained cordial equations with the BJP leadership, which also appears to be favourably disposed towards them. This was evident from the Prime Minister's demeanour when he interacted with the two leaders during his visit to Chennai on May 26 to inaugurate infrastructure projects. Earlier, the AIADMK was able to get the backing of the BJP as well as the Pattali Makkal Katchi, another erstwhile ally, for the election of its two candidates – C.Ve. Shanmugam and R. Dharmar – to the Rajya Sabha.

When everything appeared to be normal, the AIADMK organisation secretary C. Ponnaiyan's outburst against the BJP came as a bolt from the blue. Addressing a workshop organised by the party's Puratchi Thalaivi Peravai for its office-bearers on May 31, Mr. Ponnaiyan, who served under three Chief Ministers and held various portfolios, said even though the BJP was "an ally" of his party, its growth in the State did "not augur well for the AIADMK, Tamil Nadu and Dravidian policies." He accused the national party of seeking to grow at the expense of his party in the State and indulging in "double-dealing" on inter-State disputes concerning the Cauvery river and the Mullaperiyar dam.

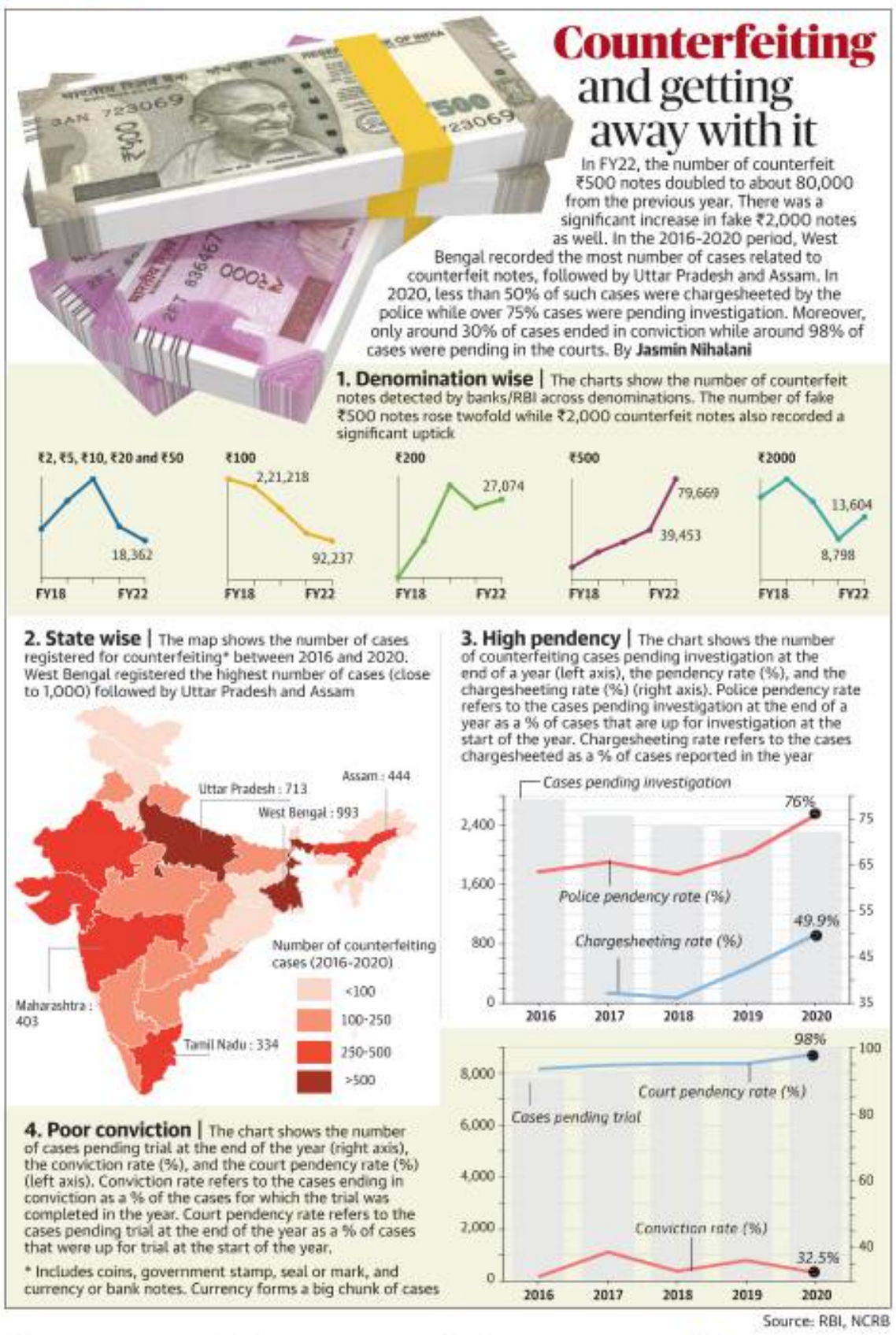
A key reason for the AIADMK's veteran to lash out at the BJP could be the way the national party has been making efforts to enlarge its space in the State politics. This trend became more visible when L. Murugan, now Union Minister of State, was the BJP unit president from March 2020 to July 2021. Improving upon the approach, his successor, K. Annamalai, is taking on the ruling DMK on every issue, attempting to create a perception that the BJP is a fast-growing party in Tamil Nadu.

Mr. Annamalai reacted to Mr. Ponniayan's charge saying it the AIADMK senior leader's personal opinion. It was his party's vice-presidents – V.P. Duraisamy and Karu Nagarajan – who launched a full-blown attack on the former Minister. Mr. Panneerselvam and Mr. Palaniswami initially stayed silent. This was in contrast to last July when Mr. Palaniswami issued a statement reiterating that the AIADMK's alliance with the BJP would continue, after Mr. Shanmugam cited the alliance as the factor for the loss of support of religious minorities during the Assembly elections. Later, when the co-coordinator shot back at Mr. Duraisamy saying that the BJP's vice-president did not have to certify the AIADMK's functioning as the principal Opposition party, Mr. Panneerselvam sought to put a lid on the controversy by calling Mr. Ponnaiyan's observations his personal view.

The exchange of words seems to have come to an end with both Mr. Panneerselvam and Mr. Palaniswami greeting Mr. Annamalai on Twitter on Saturday on his birthday. On Sunday, the BJP State president went on record saying that his party colleagues should not express any personal opinion on the AIADMK without the leadership's permission. At the same time, he made it clear that his party had never entertained the thought of seeking to grow in the State at the cost of the AIADMK. A message also came from the AIADMK's spokesperson and former Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar that there was no split between his party and the national party.

ramakrishnan.t@thehindu.co.in

DATA POINT



The Hindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 6, 1972

Milk for all slum children by August

Madras, June 5: The Chief Minister, Mr. K. Karunanidhi said here to-day that all children in the City slums upto 3 years of age would be supplied with milk under the "expanded nutrition programme" by early August. To start with, 12,000 children will be getting milk under the new programme, which was inaugurated by the Chief Minister at a function in Shenoynagar. At present the Centrally aided nutrition programme for urban slums, under implementation in Madras and 18 municipal towns, covered only children upto 3 years of age, who are being supplied with bread. It is now being extended to children upto 6 years of age and to pregnant women of lactating mothers to benefit nearly 2.25 lakh children and 40,000 women in Tamil Nadu. Children in City slums (upto 3 years of age) will get milk in addition to bread. Mr. Karunanidhi said the State Government received Rs. 65 lakhs as aid from the Centre towards the scheme last year and it had been raised to Rs. 1.5 crores this year. The Central Government, he said, had commended the progress achieved by the State in this respect and had promised to give more aid if required. He expressed the Government's determination to extend the nutrition programme throughout Tamil Nadu and said, while every effort would be made to secure as much Central aid as possible, they would not hesitate to meet the financial commitment from the State's own resources.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 6, 1922

A Conference

London, June 4: The first annual National Conference of the British Legion opened today in Canoa street hotel. The meeting was largely attended by delegates from all parts of the country by the representatives of the American, French and Belgian legions and by delegates from the Empire Service League, Canada, India, Newfoundland and Australia were represented. Earl Haig who presided read a telegram from the Prince of Wales, patron of the Legion expressing his best wishes to the Conference and to this a reply was sent thanking the Prince for his influential services to the Legion and anticipating with utmost pleasure, the Prince's return from His highly successful tour. Earl Haig mentioned that there were 412,000 exservicemen who were without work in Britain and 24,889 disabled men, still awaiting industrial training.

FROM PAGE ONE

BJP acts against leaders for hate remarks

Thus the Ministry termed the spokespersons of the BJP "fringe elements".

The BJP released a statement signed by party general secretary Arun Singh distancing it from these statements, without naming either Ms. Sharma or Mr. Kumar or contextualising the statement with their utterances.

Ms. Sharma made her statements during a TV debate titled *The Gyanvapi Files* on May 26, on the TV channel *Times Now*, while Mr. Kumar made objectionable tweets on communal lines. *Times Now* had earlier released a statement distancing itself from Ms. Sharma's remarks.

Statement withdrawn

"During the thousands of years of the history of India, every religion has blossomed and flourished. BJP respects all religions. BJP strongly denounces insult of any religious personalities of any religion. The BJP does not promote such people of philosophy," said the statement released by the party.

In the suspension letter served on Ms. Sharma, the party said that she had "expressed views contrary to the party's position on various matters which is in clear violation of Rule 10(a) of the Constitution of the Bharatiya Janata Party."

Ms. Sharma, after her suspension, released her own statement unconditionally withdrawing her remarks made by her on the TV debate. "I have been attending TV debates for the past many days where our *Mahadev* was being insulted and disrespected continuously. It was mockingly being said that it is not a *Shivling* but a fountain (reference to the videographic survey of the Gyanvapi Mosque in May). The *Shivling* was also being ridiculed by comparing it to roadside signs and poles. I could not tolerate this continuous insult and disrespect towards our *Mahadev* and I said some things in response to it. If my words have caused discomfort or hurt feelings of anyone whatsoever, I hereby unconditionally withdraw my statement. It was never my intention to hurt religious feelings."

According to sources in the party, the controversy over the statements was becoming bigger by the day, provoking violence in Kanpur on Friday.

Hashtags calling for the boycott of Indian goods in Gulf countries trended on Twitter and more seriously, the Grand Mufti of Oman tweeting from his official account denouncing the remarks made by Ms. Sharma during the TV debate.

West Asian nations demand public apology

While the Indian Embassy in Doha and Kuwait called those posting offensive tweets as "fringe elements", the Qatari and Kuwaiti governments demanded a public apology from the government.

"Noting that State of Qatar is expecting a public apology and immediate condemnation of these remarks from the Government of India, pointing out that allowing such Islamophobic remarks to continue without punishment, constitutes a grave danger to the protection of human rights and may lead to further prejudice and marginalization, which will create a cycle of violence and hate," the Foreign Ministry of Qatar said.

Deliberate insult

In a stronger comment on Twitter, Qatar's Assistant Foreign Minister and Spokesperson Lolwah Alkhater wrote that "Islamophobic discourse has reached dangerous levels in a country long known for its diversity and coexistence", indicating India. He said unless the Government of India "officially and systemically" confronts hate speech, it would be considered a "deliberate insult" against two billion Muslims worldwide.

An official dinner in honour of Vice-President Mr. Venkaiah Naidu to be held by the Deputy Emir of Qatar Abdullah bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani was also cancelled on Sunday evening, sources confirmed, ostensibly as he was suspected to have come in contact with an individual who had tested positive for the coronavirus.

When asked, MEA officials said that the cancellation was not connected to Qatar's protest over the offensive comments, and pointed out that Mr. Naidu had been informed of the cancellation earlier and the rest of the Vice President's visit was proceeding as scheduled and has not been curtailed.

In its response, the Indian Embassy issued a statement, hours after Ambassador Deepak Mittal was summoned to the Foreign Ministry and handed the demarche.

"In line with our civilisational heritage and strong cultural traditions of unity in diversity, Government of India accords the highest respect to all religions," read the statement, adding that "Strong action has already been taken against those who made the derogatory remarks".

"A statement has also been issued by concerned quarters emphasizing respect for all religions, denouncing insult to any religious personality or demeaning any religion or sect," it said, referring to the statement issued by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. A similiar statement was issued by the Indian Embassy in Kuwait.

7 girls drown in a pit near dam in Tamil Nadu

The dead were identified as R. Priyadarshini, 15, and her sister Divya Darshini, 10, of Ayan Kurunjipadi village and A. Monisha, 16, M. Navaneetha, 18, K. Priya, 18, S. Sangavi, 16, and M. Kumudha, 18, all from A. Kuchipalayam.

As news spread, the family members of the victims thronged the hospital. State Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister M.R.K. Panneerselvam and District Collector, Cuddalore, K. Balasubramaniam called on the family members at the hospital and consoled them.

Eyewitnesses said there were several pits along the banks of the river near the check dam and children often come to bathe.

When contacted, Mr. Balasubramaniam said an inquiry by the Revenue Divisional Officer had been ordered into the incident. He said the Revenue Department had been directed to place warning boards in the area. All village administrative officers had been instructed to take necessary precautionary measures at all waterbodies to prevent instances of drowning, he said.

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin condoled the deaths and announced a solatium of ₹5 lakh each to the families of the deceased from the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund.

Radical outfits hold 'freedom march'

Uneasy calm prevails in Amritsar ahead of 38th anniversary of Operation Bluestar on Monday

VIKAS VASUDEVA
AMRITSAR

Members associated with radical Sikh outfits and pro-Khalistan groups such as the Dal Khalsa and the Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) took out what they termed a "freedom march" in the city on Sunday, a day ahead of the 38th anniversary of Operation Bluestar, even as an uneasy calm was palpable among residents.

The protesters, including youth and the elderly, carrying Khalistan flags and placards, raised slogans in support of independence, demanding a separate state for Sikhs, Khalistan, as the march started from the Bhai Veer Singh Memorial Hall on Lawrence Road. They hailed the sacrifice of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, and vowed to continue their struggle for Khalistan. A float with pictures and portraits of the damaged Akal Takht and Sikh martyrs was displayed during the march.

Tight security: Rapid Action Force personnel conduct a flag march after security was beefed up , in Amritsar. • PTI

Tight security has been provided across the city with regular flag marches being conducted in several areas, besides intense checking being done to maintain law and order.

"We are holding this march to reiterate our commitment for the struggle for independence, and to pay homage to the people who tasted martyrdom during the Army attack," said one of participating members.

Dal Khalsa president Harpal Singh Cheema said they were undertaking the freedom parade to pay homage to Sikh heroes, who fought till their last breath. "We want to tell the Government of India that we have neither forgotten nor forgiven the perpetrators of the attack," he said. "The mission of the martyrs was to liberate Punjab from Indian domination. We are determined to pursue the mission to its logical conclusion using right to self-determination," Mr. Cheema said.

It was on June 6, 1984, when the Army stormed the complex of the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar – Sikhism's holiest shrine – to flush out extremists led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

Security intensified

During the day, the Commissioner of Police held a meeting with officers to ensure coordination in action against anti-social elements and maintenance of law and order in the city.

"We have put in place a force of around 7,000 personnel, including the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and two of the Rapid Action Force RAF) units across the city. For the march, 400 police personnel have been deputed to ensure law and order," Parminder Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police (law and order), Amritsar, said.

Meanwhile, Harjinder Singh, president of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), the body responsible for the management of gurdwaras, condemned the State government for turning Amritsar city into a "police cantonment".

The radical Sikh outfits have also called for 'Amritsar shutdown' on June 6 to mark the anniversary of 'Operation Bluestar'. "

FIR against owner in U.P. factory fire

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HAPUR

An FIR has been registered against the owner and the operator of a factory in Hapur where at least 13 workers were killed and 20 injured in an explosion, the police said on Sunday. The incident took place at Ruhi Industries in the Dhaulana area on Saturday.

The police said 11 of the deceased had been identified. They were from Bahraich (Uttar Pradesh) and Bihar.

According to Superintendent of Police Deepak Bhuker, the factory owner, Dilshad, and the operator, Wasim, had been booked under several Sections of the IPC. The police said the factory had the licence to manufacture only electronic goods and an investigation was under way to ascertain how explosives reached there.

Plans afoot for 90th Interpol annual meet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Preparations are afoot for the 90th Interpol General Assembly that is to be held in the national capital later this year. The arrangements for the event are being made by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in coordination with other government agencies.

It is learnt that the Interpol officials have met their counterparts from the CBI and other government officials on multiple occasions, the latest being this past week, to chalk out the plan of action for organising the event.

The CBI is the designated nodal body for the Interpol in India. It works in close coordination with the Interpol and other member countries for the sharing of inputs related to trans-national crimes and persons wanted by enforcement agencies across the world.

Representatives of the 195 Interpol member countries are expected to participate in the meeting this October, which is to be held at Pragati Maidan.

HC remark on conversion 'right' raises questions

A 1977 SC verdict says Article 25 does not allow such a right

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

Recent observations by the Delhi High Court that religious conversion, unless forced, is not prohibited raise a question if proselytism is also protected under the right to religious freedom in the Constitution.

A petition in the Delhi HC has alleged mass conversions.

A few days ago, the High Court, hearing a petition by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay to frame laws to prohibit conversions by force or deception, observed that "first and foremost, conversion is not prohibited. It is a right of an individual to profess any religion, religion of his birth, or religion that he chooses to profess. That is the freedom our Constitution grants".

Article 25(1) of the Constitution says that "subject to public order, morality and health... all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practise and propagate religion".

Though a person has a right to "profess" or affirm his allegiance to a religion, does Article 25 extend the right to "propagate" one's religion to converting another to one's faith?

In the HC, Mr. Upadhyay had reportedly alleged "mass conversions" of underprivileged people, particularly the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

In its 1977 judgment, a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, in *Rev. Stainislaus versus State of Madhya Pradesh*, had held that the word 'propagate' in Article 25 does not give "the right to convert another person to one's own religion, but to spread one's religion by an exposition of its tenets".

The Constitution Bench had also held there was "no fundamental right to convert another person to one's own religion". "If a person purposely undertakes conversion of another... as distinguished from his effort to transmit or spread the tenets of his religion, that would impinge on the 'freedom of conscience' guaranteed to all the citizens of the country alike," the 1977 verdict said.

But Supreme Court advocate Kaleeswaram Raj said the 1977 judgment remains "incomplete".

"Even though the right to propagate religion does not include the right to convert, one's fundamental right under Article 25 to freely profess or practise religion will include the right to get converted. The Stainislaus judgment only dealt with the right to propagate or convert, and not the right to get converted. The Delhi High Court's view is more on the right to get converted. It is an area the Constitution Bench did not go deeper into," Mr. Raj said.

Rajnath to hand over 12 speed boats to Vietnam

He will discuss defence ties during visit

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is scheduled to visit Vietnam from June 8 to 10 during which he will preside over the handing-over ceremony of 12 High Speed Guard Boats constructed under the Government of India's $100 million defence Line of Credit (LoC).

Rajnath Singh

He will hold bilateral talks with General Phan Van Giang, during which both the Ministers will review defence cooperation between the two countries and explore new initiatives to further strengthen the defence engagements, a Defence Ministry said in a statement. "The two Ministers will also exchange views on regional and global issues of shared interest."

Mr. Singh is visiting at the invitation of his Vietnamese counterpart Gen. Phan and will start his visit by paying respects to late President Ho Chi Minh at his Mausoleum in Hanoi.

He is also scheduled to call on Vietnamese President Nguyen Xuan Phuc and Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh.

He will also visit the training institutions of Vietnam at Nha Trang, including the Telecommunication University where an Army Software Park is being established with a $5 million grant from India.

Hanoi is procuring 12 high speed patrol boats for the Vietnamese border guard force under the LoC extended in September 2014. In 2016, India extended another $500 million defence LoC to Vietnam and discussions are under way to identify the equipment.

The Defence Minister's visit will further consolidate the bilateral defence cooperation and the comprehensive strategic partnership, the Ministry added.

Project to track small fishing vessels pending since 26/11

Despite trials being conducted, efforts to install the satellite-based Vehicle Monitoring System remain stuck, say officials

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

As the Quad grouping looks to track and address illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Indo-Pacific, an ambitious effort to install the satellite-based Vehicle Monitoring System (VMS) for small fishing vessels (less than 20 metres) across the country's coastline is still to be rolled out. Despite pilot studies being conducted, the project, conceived in the aftermath of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, remains stuck, government officials say.

"Tracking of our small fishing vessels is something pending since 26/11, but it has been stuck primarily due to two reasons," an official said on condition of anonymity. "Fishermen don't want to get tagged as they do not want any of their illegal activities recorded and they are sceptical that others will get to know of where there is good catch. Second is that fishing is a State subject and there are local politics involved," the official said.

The official further stated that there is no legislation to force fishermen to install the transponders and efforts by the Ministry of Fisheries to table the Indian Marine Fisheries Bill, 2021 which covers this has repeatedly been delayed due to the opposition from the States and fishermen.

Quad initiative

The Quad grouping, comprising India, Australia, Japan and the U.S., announced at the Tokyo summit last month an ambitious Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) initiative to track "dark shipping" and to build a "faster, wider, and more accurate maritime picture of near-real-time activities in partners' waters" integrating three critical regions in the Indo-Pacific – the Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia, and Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

There are two main regulations globally on IUU fishing – the Cape Town Agreement (CTA) and the Agreement on Ports State Measures (PSMA) – and India is, so far, not a signatory to both agreements.

The Automatic Identification System (AIS) is for bigger ships, which was made compulsory for all vessels above 20 metres after 26/11 by the National Committee on Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security (NCSMCS).

For smaller fishing vessels, VMS, which is slightly different from AIS, is used, another official said, explaining that AIS is a broadcast mode which anyone can receive while VMS is a proprietary system and one can't receive unless the data is given. In terms of functioning VMS has a transponder which relays data via a satellite.

Under watch: The monitoring system will help in tracking illegal and unregulated fishing, said officials.

Trials were conducted on tracking of vessels under 20 m first fitted on small patrol boats in Mumbai followed by trials on fishing vessels both of which were successful, the official said. "Further a pilot was carried out on a small number of fishing vessels along the coasts of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu."

The trials were conducted in association with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on one of their communication satellites and the transponders have advanced features like weather alert and so on but there has been no progress, the official further explained.

"Trials were again conducted in 2021 in collaboration with a start-up which were also successful. But there has been no movement since." World over fishing vessels are supposed to have VMS which does not only give the position identity, the fishing vessel is also supposed to feed in the volume of the catch and where was it caught which tackles the issue of IUU.

Growing concern on IUU

There has been growing concern and action on IUU fishing that depletes fish stocks, destroys marine habitats, puts fishermen at disadvantage and impacts coastal communities, especially in developing countries.

In addition, there is also the issue of subsidies for fishermen. It is believed that more the subsidies given, more the illegal fishing, and there has been a campaign across the world against subsidies. India has been under pressure over this, two officials independently noted.

Bhima Koregaon accused write open letter of pledge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

It has been four years since Prof. Shoma Sen, advocate Surendra Gadling, activist Rona Wilson, Mahesh Raut and Sudhir Dhawale were arrested for the Bhima Koregaon-Elgar Parishad conference. They have written an open letter that they are still committed to take up the cudgels for the labourers, the underprivileged and the downtrodden.

They write, "Workers, students, writers, poets, scholars, journalists and even common people who have chosen to fight against the ruling powers in the country on behalf of dalits, tribals and the underprivileged, are all being targeted. Many are being put behind bars to stifle their dissent. And terrorism laws are brazenly used for this purpose. Under these laws, a person can do nothing to defend themselves. Even bail is flatly denied by courts."

"We are still committed to take up the cudgels for the labourers, the underprivileged and the downtrodden. We have raised our voice and have battled injustice, exploitation, plunder, discrimination and inequality. We know this ruthless world gives nothing without a fight and so our struggle has been first for food and then for liberation," the letter reads.

Ms. Sen is in Byculla jail and the others are lodged in Taloja Central jail.

APPEAL

B/o. **Barveena** aged 34 days. She was admitted with **Respiratory Distress Syndrome**. She needed surfactant administration and has been ventilated because of extreme prematurity (26 weeks) she will need an extended hospital stay. The total cost for the treatment will be approximately **Rs. 3,00,000/-** at Dr. Jayaharan Memorial Hospital, Nagercoil. Her family is extremely poor and cannot afford the huge expenditure. She needs your blessings and support. The donations sent through Ch/D.D/ NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, **A/c. No. 60182010063310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018**) favouring **Women's Welfare Syndicate** is exempted under 80G IT.

All correspondence is done through **WWS**, Regd Public Charitable Trust, **Flat No. GF 1, Corddel Apartments, O.No.13, N.No.29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401/ 28235324/ 7338978027. E-Mail: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com.** Website: www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org **WWS**

INTERVIEW | KAPIL SIBAL

'I will continue to support the right causes of the Congress'

Along with other like-minded people, I hope to bring all Opposition parties on one platform, says Independent Rajya Sabha member and former Union Minister

SANDEEP PHUKAN

Once among the most visible faces of the Manmohan Singh government, former Union Minister **Kapil Sibal** *transformed into a trenchant critic of the Congress leadership under the Gandhis before quietly bowing out. In his first interview after being elected Independent member of the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Sibal speaks about his new role, and plans to bring the Opposition parties together, but stays away from discussing the Congress. Edited excerpts:*

How is your new role going to be different from your previous ones, both inside Parliament as well as outside?

■ The fact that I am not a member of a political party itself defines my role for the future. I will be independent within the House and my views will be consistent with my ideology which has been central to my articulation on any particular subject. I am opposed to the ideology of the present establishment and that will continue. I am also opposed to the present dispensation which is targeting individuals through agencies of the government. I have a much broader canvas to work on because I am free to connect with leaders. It's a very tough task, but along with other like-minded people, I hope to bring all Opposition parties on one platform. The other significant thing about being an Independent member is that on every contentious issue, I can articulate my independent view.

Some of your former colleagues in the Congress have criticised you and claimed the G-23 (the group that called for internal reforms in the Congress) was all about Rajya Sabha berths.

■ Well, first of all, I never asked the party for the Rajya Sabha seat from the Congress. They can check from the leadership of the party if I ever sought any sort of Rajya Sabha seat in the coming elections. Number two, I could have joined another party. I didn't have to say that I would come to Parliament as an Independent candidate. Of course, people have the right to criticise but I don't think the leadership of the Congress has made any such comment.

Given your strong views earlier, your parting was a rather mellow affair.

■ There is no parting because my ideology remains the same. It's no parting at all. And I will continue to support the right causes of the Congress and be an independent voice, if the causes are not right. That is true of all political parties.

But you have formerly quit the Congress?

■ Yes, I did

So what triggered that parting? It seems Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav was willing to support on a Congress ticket as well.

■ That's entirely personal and I don't want to air any public views on matters which are entirely personal. What happened in the past are not matters for public discourse.

The other significant thing about being an Independent member is that on every contentious issue, I can articulate my independent view

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he wants a strong Opposition, but the principal Opposition party, the Congress, seems to be hurtling from one crisis to another.

■ If Modi*ji* means what he says then he should walk the talk. I ask our Prime Minister why is it that every major political leader in this country is being targeted by the Central agencies? None in the BJP is being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate [ED] or Income Tax or the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation].

So when you say that you want a strong Opposition, you must also not use your agencies for political motives, destabilise governments and destroy majorities by misusing the provisions of the 10th schedule and the Governors. If you want a strong Opposition, you should not be capturing institutions through which only your narrative flows to the people of this country or corner 80-90% of your financial resources through electoral bonds. My only request to the Prime Minister is: if you genuinely want a strong Opposition, then be more democratic.

As far as the Congress is concerned, I don't comment on the internal function of another party. That's why I am an independent voice. Within the Congress, I could do what I did but outside, I will never say anything against the internal functioning of a political party. I have no ill feeling, enmity or rancour against the Congress.

As a lawyer, you had earlier handled the *National Herald* case and must be aware that ED has summoned Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in a money laundering case. What are your thoughts on this?

■ This is a bogus case. How can a person be laundering money with the assets belonging to a non-profit company. That money under the law can never come to the Gandhis. So how could they ever be laundering money? I mean, it is absurd. Motivated prosecution is launched merely because somebody stood up to the BJP juggernaut. This is again inconsistent with the statement of the Prime Minister that he wants a strong Opposition.

In a recent interview, SP leader Azam Khan thanked you for getting him bail but he seemed fairly unhappy with Akhilesh Yadav. So, every Opposition party seems to be facing some internal problems.

■ There are two parts to your question. So let me first address the part relating to Azam Khan and I just want to make one thing clear that I have no previous association with him. Whenever I take up causes, it is because I feel deeply about the injustice done to the individual or to an organisation or to even a community. When the facts came to light, it showed that 87 cases had been foisted on him; for something as frivolous as stealing a goat. Some incidents were of 2004, 2007, 2008 and we are in 2022.

The Uttar Pradesh government started targeting him and 20-25 FIRs [first information reports] were lodged in the course of two days; at 1 o'clock at night, 2 o'clock at night. This happened immediately after he got elected to the Lok Sabha as a significant leader of his community.

As far as the relationship of Mr. Azam Khan within the party is concerned, who am I to comment on that. It is for the party to take care of its future and I am sure that things will work out.

BJP playing 'good cop, bad cop' by suspending leaders: Cong.

Action taken against Sharma and Kumar following external pressure, it says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Reacting to the Bharatiya Janata Party's decision to suspend its spokesperson Nupur Sharma and the media cell head of its Delhi unit, Naveen Kumar, from the primary membership of the party after outrage over their comments against Islam, the Congress said the BJP cannot fool people by playing this "good cop, bad cop" routine.

Senior leader and Rajya Sabha member Jairam Ramesh said, "The BJP is fooling nobody by this 'good cop, bad cop' routine. This is usual tactics. Get one of your people to make obnoxious statements and then appear moderate by rebuking them."

He further pointed out that Qatar chose to tick off India when Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu is visiting the country.

Raising objection: Congress members protesting in Kota against Nupur Sharma over her remarks on Prophet Muhammed. • PTI

Mr. Ramesh said, "First, get your people to be obnoxious. Then act against them under pressure, to appear moderate. MEA calling BJP spokespersons 'fringe elements' is a joke."

Former Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor tweeted, "Object lesson: Those who express bigotry at home should be aware of the consequences abroad. India has enjoyed a proud standing in the world, which is being undermined by the irresponsibility of the communal-minded who have been allowed free rein for too long by the ruling party. I think such remarks should be beyond the pale in any civilised society and I am glad BJP has taken exemplary action."

Congress general secretary (communications) Randeep Surjewala, in a statement, questioned the knee-jerk action taken by the BJP. "The placatory expulsion of two key members and spokespersons of the BJP from its primary membership, done obviously under duress of threats from external powers, exposes the much-touted 'muscular posturing' and positioning of the BJP and the Modi government," he said.

"Is BJP sincere about course-correcting? Is BJP trying to atone for its immeasurable sins or is it more chameleon-like posturing? Will the bulldozing of India's soul, its ethos and its all-encompassing humanity by the bulldozer of hatred finally stop? Will the mob-lynching of our constitutional ethos cease? A short statement by BJP is unlikely to half the millions of wounds inflicted on the ethos of Indianness," Mr. Surjewala added.

Naveen Patnaik revamps Council of Ministers

11 Ministers, including six holding Cabinet berths, dropped

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

Naveen Patnaik inducted 21 Ministers, including 13 Cabinet Ministers, while reconstituting the Council of Ministers in his fifth term as Odisha Chief Minister on Sunday.

Governor Ganeshi Lal administered the oath of office and secrecy to the new Ministers in the presence of Mr. Patnaik and senior party functionaries at the Lok Seva Bhavan here.

In the complete revamp, 11 Ministers, including six holding Cabinet berths, were dropped. Senior Ministers Pratap Jena, Arun Kumar Sahoo, Sushanta Singh and Bikram Keshari Arukha lost their Cabinet berths. Seven MLAs took oath as Ministers for the first time in their career.

Though the names of two former Ministers – Mr. Jena and Dibya Shankar Mishra – were linked to murder charges, Mr. Patnaik did not immediately drop them following attacks from Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress but was waiting for an opportune moment to sack them.

Mr. Patnaik increased women's representation from two in the last Cabinet to five.

Rajendra Dholakia, Nuapada MLA, made his debut as a Cabinet Minister. Of the eight Ministers of State (Independent) inducted, six were new faces. Sameer Ranjan Das, who was Minister of State (Independent) for School and Mass Education, was retained.

Surjya Narayan Patro, who resigned from the Speaker's post, was not inducted.

Two of the 30 districts do not have any representation in the new Ministry.

New look: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik during the oath-taking ceremony in Bhubaneswar on Sunday. • PTI

SIT set up to probe Kanpur clashes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

The Commissioner of Police in Kanpur has formed a special investigation team (SIT) to unravel the conspiracy behind the clashes that erupted in the city on June 3.

The SIT will look into the mobile phone records, bank deposits, and a number of objectionable documents recovered from the residence of the main accused, Zafar Hayat Hashmi, that indicate his alleged links to the Popular Front of India and its allied organisations, Commissioner of Police Vijay Singh Meena said

Himanta takes aim at Delhi CM over PPE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI

A day after threatening to file a criminal defamation case against Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia over allegations of corruption in procurement of PPE kits, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday claimed that his counterpart in New Delhi offered to buy medical equipment without floating any tender in 2020.

Mr. Sarma tagged an old tweet by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in which he urged MP Gautam Gambhir to arrange PPE kits from anywhere "immediately". "Delhi CM *suo motu* offered to buy PPE kits from anywhere without tender. Why?" he tweeted.

Ahead of Rajya Sabha elections, Congress appoints observers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

With the Rajya Sabha elections expected to go down to the wire, Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Monday appointed senior leaders as observers for Rajasthan, Haryana and Maharashtra.

Five Congress candidates are in the fray in the three States for the June 10 elections.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and Rajeev Shukla, who recently secured the Rajya Sabha berth from the State, were appointed as observers for Haryana, party treasurer Pawan Kumar Bansal and Chhattisgarh Health Minister T.S. Singh Deo have been picked for Rajasthan, and Leader of the Opposition in the Upper House Mallikarjun Kharge has been assigned the job to oversee the election in Maharashtra.

Congress general secretary Ajay Maken is the candidate from Haryana where two seats are vacant.

Based on the numerical strength of each party, the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are likely to get one seat each, but media baron Kartikeya Sharma, who is also in the fray, has made the contest tough for the party.

The BJP is backing Mr. Sharma who is contesting as an Independent. He is the brother of Manu Sharma, who was convicted in the Jessica Lal murder case. Both his father, Venod Sharma, and father-in-law, Kuldeep Sharma, are considered close to former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda. Mr. Venod was a Minister in the Congress government until 1999 in Haryana, and Mr. Kuldeep is a former Haryana Assembly Speaker.

The Congress needs 31 votes to win the seat and has as many MLAs. The BJP, on behalf of Mr. Sharma, is banking on cross-voting.

Meanwhile, the Congress has shifted its Haryana MLAs to a resort in Raipur in Congress-ruled Chhattisgarh, hoping to sequester them from the influence of the BJP.

For the four Rajya Sabha seats in Rajasthan, the Congress has fielded three candidates –Randeep Surjewala, Mukul Wasnik and Pramod Tiwari.

Fight for third seat

The Congress, with 108 MLAs, is set to win two seats. After winning the two seats, the party will have 26 surplus votes, 15 short of the required 41 to win the third seat. The party is banking on the support of Independents for the third seat.

On the other hand, the BJP has 71 MLAs in the State Assembly and is set to win one seat after which it will be left with 30 surplus votes.

The BJP has fielded its former Minister Ghanshyam Tiwari, and backed media baron Subhash Chandra as an Independent for the second seat.

Nearly 70 Congress MLAs are camping at a hotel in Udaipur ahead of the elections, fearing horse-trading.

In Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena and the BJP will battle it out for the sixth Rajya Sabha seat as none of the seven candidates in the fray – four of the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition and three of the BJP – withdrew their nominations on Friday.

Of the 57 vacancies in the Rajya Sabha, 41 candidates in 11 States have so far been elected unopposed.

The elections will be held for 16 seats in four States –Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Haryana and Karnataka.

'BJP incompetent to handle Kashmir'

It should cancel bonds signed by Kashmiri Pandits under PM Relief Plan: Kejriwal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday demanded an action plan from the Union government on how it aimed to stop the killings of Kashmiri Pandits, Hindus and Army men in the Valley.

He said that every time there was a killing in Kashmir, the Union Home Minister called a "high-level" meeting, which was "only a gimmick" as Kashmir is in dire need of immediate measures to tackle terrorism on the ground.

"In the past 30 years, there have been two incidents of genocides and exodus of Kashmiri Pandits. Both of them happened under the watch of a BJP government. This means BJP is incompetent to handle Kashmir. The Centre should accept and agree with all the demands Kashmiri Pandits have made and provide them the highest levels of protection and security to make them feel safe," Mr. Kejriwal said.

AAP leaders protesting in New Delhi on Sunday against the Centre's failure to stop the attacks in J&K. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Mr. Kejriwal was addressing a *Jan Aakrosh* rally organised by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) at Jantar Mantar to remember those who were killed. He said the entire nation had been rattled with the way violence was unfolding in the Kashmir Valley and that there was a great degree of anger towards the current situation there.

He assured every single resident of Jammu and Kashmir that the AAP was there for them and that it would not falter in taking any necessary step in ensuring peace in their households.

"I will soon meet Home Minister Amit Shah to discuss the situation with him. The entire country is here to protect Kashmir. We will definitely find a solution," he added.

The Chief Minister said that the only demand of Kashmiri Pandits was to provide them the bare minimum, which is to protect them from being murdered.

He also demanded that the Centre immediately cancel the bonds that Kashmiri Pandits were "forced to sign" under the PM Relief Plan that said they cannot work outside Kashmir.

Sena, NCP slam Centre over Kashmir killings

Govt. busy promoting films, says Raut

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Remarking that the situation in Kashmir was getting out of hand with the rise in targeted attacks on members of the minority communities, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday lashed out at the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Union government for promoting films rather than heeding the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley.

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) – the Sena's ally in Maharashtra – too hit out at the Union government for not making "concrete efforts to rehabilitate Kashmiri Pandits in their homeland".

"Kashmir is burning once again. It is red with blood. The situation there is getting out of hand, but New Delhi's prominent leaders are busy promoting films, be it *The Kashmir Files* or *Samrat Prithviraj*. Is this the government's job? Why aren't they listening to the anger of the Kashmiri Pandits," Mr. Raut asked.

He said that not just the Hindu community, but Muslims serving in the security forces too were being targeted by militants.

Mr. Raut added that Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had expressed concern over the deteriorating situation in Kashmir and said that Maharashtra would stand by the Kashmiri Pandits and their families through thick and thin.

RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE TECHNOLOGIES
ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA.
NOTIFICATION

Advertisement No. RGUKT-AP/Estt/Recruitment/2022 **Date: 06.06.2022**

Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies, Andhra Pradesh invites applications for the position of Vice-Chancellor.For more details, please visit University website www.rgukt.in. Applications along with bio-data in the prescribed format should reach the address given below on or before **5.00 P.M** on **01.07.2022.**

The Office of the Chancellor,
Administrative Building (13-Block), RGUKT Nuzvid campus, NUZVID, Eluru District, Andhra Pradesh - 521202

Note: 1.Candidates who applied in response to the earlier notification are required to update their CV if desirous of consideration of their candidature.
2.The University reserves the right to fill or not to fill the position.
3.The University is not responsible for postal delays.

Place: **NUZVID** **Office of the Chancellor RGUKT-AP**

KOLKATA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION e-TENDER

ABRIDGED NIT

The Ch. Mpl. Engineer (SWM), KMC invites Request for Proposal (RfP) for the work mentioned below (Submission online) :-
Tender Reference No.: KMC/SWM/RFP/MRF/PLANT/II/21-22
Scheme/Work(s) : **"Setting Up of Material Recovery Facility including Operation and Maintenance for the Kolkata City". The document for Request for Proposal (RfP) and other details are available on and from 08.06.2022 from 05:00 p.m. from the website https://wbtenders.gov.in** and **www.kmcgov.in**; Last Date & Time of bid submission : **05.07.2022 up to 02:00 p.m.**

225/22-23

PM calls for protection of soil health

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Crediting his government with issuing soil health cards that farmers could use to better plan their agricultural activities, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that to save soil, focus was necessary on making it chemical free, saving the organisms that lived in it, maintaining soil moisture, and increasing the availability of water for tilling.

Mr. Modi and spiritual guru Jaggi Vasudev were attending a function here on World Environment Day to mark 75 days of an ongoing world tour by the latter to increase awareness of rejuvenating soil health as part of the "Save Soil Movement" promoted by the Isha Foundation .

The Prime Minister also spoke on removing the damage that is happening to the soil due to less groundwater and stopping the continuous erosion of soil due to the reduction of forests.

COVID uptick continues with 4,270 new cases

Active cases stand at 24,052, while 15 people died

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India logged 4,270 new coronavirus infections in the 24 hours to 8 a.m. on Sunday, while the daily positivity rate rose above 1% after 34 days, according to Union Health Ministry data.

It is the second time in four days that the tally is crossing the 4,000-mark.

On Friday, after nearly three months, the daily tally crossed that figure with the country recording 4,041 fresh infections.

The active cases rose to 24,052, an increase of 1,636 cases in the 24 hours, and the death toll climbed to 5,24,692 with 15 fresh fatalities.

Active cases

The active cases comprise 0.06 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate was 98.73%, the Ministry said.

The daily positivity rate was 1.03% and the weekly positivity rate 0.84%. On May 1, the daily positivity rate was 1.07%.

The case fatality rate was 1.22%.

Of the 15 new fatalities, 13 are from Kerala and one each is from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

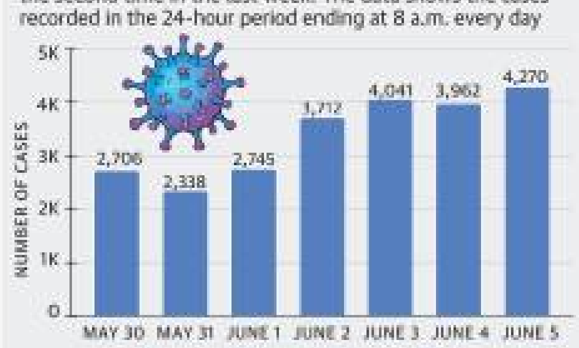
The second round of the door-to-door campaign to accelerate the pace and coverage of the COVID-19 vaccination started on June 1. It is a two-month programme.

The Union Health Ministry has asked the States and Union Territories to focus on vaccinating all those due for the second dose and those aged 60 and above and are eligible for precaution shot during the door-to-door activity.

(With ANI inputs)

Rising numbers

On Sunday, coronavirus infections crossed the 4,000 mark for the second time in the last week. The data shows the cases recorded in the 24-hour period ending at 8 a.m. every day



Rivers facing heavy pollution: CSE

Heavy toxic metals such as lead, iron, nickel present at alarming levels, says NGO

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

Three of every four river monitoring stations in India posted alarming levels of heavy toxic metals such as lead, iron, nickel, cadmium, arsenic, chromium and copper.

In about a fourth of the stations, which are spread across 117 rivers and tributaries, high levels of two or more toxic metals were reported.

Of the 33 monitoring stations in the Ganga, 10 had high levels of contaminants. The river, which is the focus of the Centre's Namami Gange mission, has high levels of lead, iron, nickel, cadmium and arsenic, according to the State of Environment Report, 2022 from the environmental NGO, the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).

The report is an annual compendium of environment-development data and is derived from public sources.

India has 764 river quality monitoring stations across 28 States. Of these, the Central Water Commission tested water samples from 688 stations for heavy metals between August 2018 and December 2020.

Of the 588 water quality stations monitored for pollution, total coliform and biochemical oxygen demand was high in 239 and 88 stations across 21 States – an indicator of poor wastewater treatment from industry, agriculture and domestic households.

India dumps 72% of its sewage without treatment. Ten States do not treat their sewage at all, as per the Central Pollution Control Board.

High pollution: Of the 33 monitoring stations on the Ganga, 10 had high levels of contaminants. • R.V. MOORTHY

Coastline erosion

Over a third of India's coastline that is spread across 6,907 km saw some degree of erosion between 1990 and 2018. West Bengal is the worst hit with over 60% of its shoreline under erosion.

The reasons for coastal erosion include increase in frequency of cyclones and sea level rise and activities such as construction of harbours, beach mining and building of dams.

While the global average of the Ocean Health Index, a measure that looks at how sustainably humans are exploiting ocean resources, has improved between 2012 and 2021, India's score in the index has declined over the same period, the CSE report underlines. India's total forest cover has registered a little over a 0.5% increase between 2017 and 2021 though most of the increase has taken place in the open forest category, which includes commercial plantations. This has happened at the cost of moderately dense forest, which is normally the area closest to human habitations. At the same time, very dense forests, which absorb maximum carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, occupy just 3% of total forest cover.

India has a forest cover of 77.53 million hectares. But recorded forests – the area under the forest department – are only 51.66 million. This gap of 25.87 million hectares – a size bigger than U.P.– remains unaccounted, the organisation noted.

World's first fishing cat census done in Chilika

The lake has 176 of the globally threatened species

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

The Chilika Lake, Asia's largest brackish water lagoon, has 176 fishing cats, according to a census conducted by the Chilika Development Authority (CDA) in collaboration with the Fishing Cat Project (TFCP).

This is the world's first population estimation of the fishing cat, which has been conducted outside the protected area network.

According to the CDA, the estimation was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 was conducted in 2021 in the 115 sq.km marshland in the north and north-eastern section of Chilika and its surrounding areas. Phase 2 was conducted in 2022 in the Parikud side along the coastal islands of Chilika.

In two phases, 150 camera traps were deployed.

150 camera traps

A total of 150 camera traps were deployed in two phases with each fixed in the field for 30 days. Spatially explicit capture recapture (SECR) method was used to analyse the data, the CDA said in a statement here.

"It was truly participatory in spirit since local fishermen and villagers of Chilika were the primary participants in this exercise. Without their support, the world's first such population estimation outside protected areas on this globally threatened cat, would not have been possible," said Susanta Nanda, Chief Executive Officer, CDA.

"Ten graduate and post-graduate students also volunteered during the exercise. Chilika Wildlife Division staff actively facilitated and participated in the population estimation. Such a participatory effort involving multiple stakeholders for studying this elusive and threatened species sets a wonderful precedent," said Partha Dey, co-founder, TFCP.

Found in 10 countries

The CDA says fishing cats are globally threatened cats that occur in wetlands such as marshlands, mangroves and flooded forests in major South and Southeast Asian river basins starting from the Indus in Pakistan till the Mekong in Vietnam and in the island nations of Sri Lanka and Java. They are found in 10 Asian countries but have remained undetected in Vietnam and Java since the last decade or so.

"Wetlands in Asia are being lost at alarmingly rapid rates and proper data on their current status or even baseline data in many countries are missing. The status of many wetland species remains understudied and highly threatened. Tracking specialist species such as the fishing cat gives us an indication of what might be happening to these ecosystems, which are safeguards against climate change and droughts," says Tiasa Adhya, co-founder, TFCP.

Earlier this year, CDA had declared its intent to adopt a five-year action plan for fishing cat conservation in Chilika.

"In collaboration with TFCP, we are soon going to share a fishing cat action plan that is socio-ecological in essence. We have already begun a year-long patrolling and monitoring programme on the cat and its sympatric species. Along with upscaling it, we will promote sustainably and traditionally harvested wetland products to prevent wetland conversion, establish a rescue and rehabilitation centre, promote small-scale experiential and educative wetland tourism, adopt habitat restoration programs as well as education programmes," Mr. Nanda said.

INTERVIEW | PRALHAD JOSHI

'Never again will there be coal shortage'

The demand for power went up due to improved economic activity, says Union Coal Minister

M. RAMESH

Twice in the recent past the country has faced coal shortage – in October 2021 and last month. While critics blame poor planning, the government says it was an "extraordinary situation", and action has been taken to ensure that a shortage never occurs again. Excerpts from an interview with Union Coal Minister **Pralhad Joshi** *at Neyveli, Tamil Nadu, where he had come to review the performance of the public sector company, NLC India Ltd.:*

You have been repeatedly saying that there is no coal shortage in the country. Yet Coal India Ltd. is taking steps to import coal. If there is no coal shortage, why go in for imports? How should we read the situation?

■ Even today, I am saying there is no shortage of coal. As of now, we are having 11-12 days stock of coal (required by power plants), on average, as a country. We have about 33.6 million tonnes of coal (lying in various places). Pithead power plants have about 25 days of stock, those about 300 km (from the mines) have about 20 days' stock, those beyond 500 km may be having 14-15 days' stock – like that.

In the last few days, there has been no depletion of stocks. We are replenishing coal stocks with power plants on a day-to-day basis. There was a shortage of coal due to an extraordinary situation. The demand for power went up due to improved economic activity, but at the same time power plants operating on imported gas and coal stopped producing power because of high gas and coal prices. Coal prices increased from $40 a tonne to $210 a tonne. Also, power plants operating with blended coal (partly imported) stopped importing and began demanding domestic coal.

Last year, domestic coal production increased by 18%. In the first two months of the current financial year, production from captive mines alone increased by 70%.

Now, coming to why we are importing – it is because of the upcoming rainy season, when mines could be waterlogged and not be able to produce coal. Also, rain could affect transportation of coal. Keeping this in mind, we want to import and keep some stocks so that the country does not suffer.

Some people have expressed fears of a 'third round' of shortage. You don't expect that to happen?

■ There won't be any coal shortage. You see, Coal India Ltd. will ramp up its production to 780 million tonnes this year. Captive mines produced 89 million tonnes (mt) last year; this year they expect to produce 130 mt. I am expecting 5 mt from commercial coal mining and another 5 mt from abandoned coal mines. All put together, coal production will increase by 100 mt. In contrast, the shortage was not even 10 mt. Still we are planning for any eventuality by imports. We will import whatever is needed.

> We have to show that we will use coal without harming the environment

So, are you confident that coal shortage is a thing of the past?

■ I'm fully confident. I want to assure the country that there will never be a coal shortage again.

You have also been saying repeatedly that the country cannot do without coal. On the other hand, India has global commitments to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. How do you handle this dichotomy?

■ We would definitely need coal for at least for a long time. Without coal, we cannot fulfil the aspirations of the country. The question is, how to use coal in a manner that doesn't affect the environment or contribute to global warming. We have to do all that we can to ensure that usage of coal does not cause any harm.

There are many ways of doing it, such as coal gasification and planting trees.

We are going in for coal gasification of high ash coal. Coal gasification is covered by the PLI scheme (production-linked incentive scheme, which gives a financial incentive for every unit of production that is sold.)

We are going in for four pilot plants for coal gasification, with imported technology.

But coal gasification plants typically suffer huge delays. For example, the Talcher project.

■ That is why we want to invite private players and also international players. Even the Talcher project is being expedited. Necessary steps are being taken.

There are many reports saying that coal power will not be competitive in future. Do you foresee any problems in coal mines getting finance?

■ There is no problem, they are already getting finance. We have sold 47 mines –

But only about 15 of them have started work

■ You see, it takes time to develop any mine. About 4-5 years. There are 21 permissions or clearances to be obtained.

But the question is, how do the financiers see the coal sector. Many international funds, such as the Norwegian sovereign fund, have said they would stop funding fossil fuels.

■ Many countries that had earlier said they would not burn coal are now turning back to coal.

Only, we have to show that we will use coal without harming the environment.

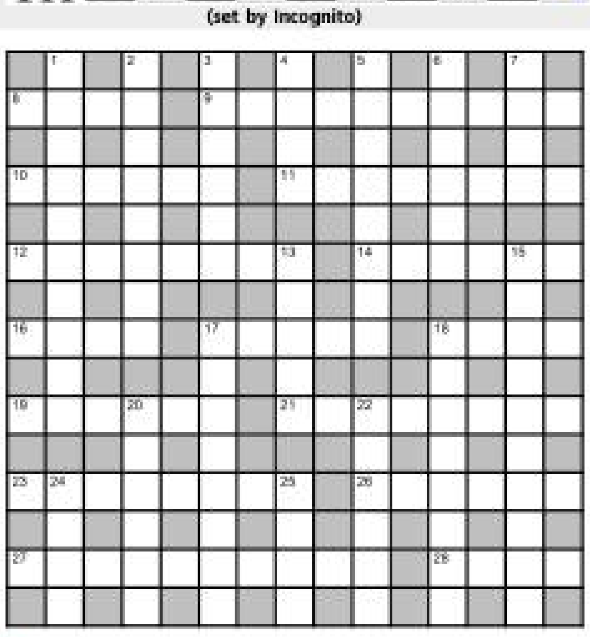
(M. Ramesh is a Special Correspondent with The Hindu Business Line)

TH CROSSWORD + 13575

(set by Incognito)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN



■ **ACROSS**

8 Cars go around lion in movie (4)
9 Perhaps, hoteliers in north look back with euphoria, reminiscing sentimentally for starters (10)
10 Medical professional is returning fish to bank of river? (6)
11 Cries out in surprise, "Previous partner demands?" (8)
12 Rival's operation initially publishes one book (8)
14 Powerful fighter hits the yard in the beginning (6)
16 Leaders of routed Indian parties shed tears (4)
17 Europeans in custody of Sudanese (5)
18 Force Ms West to hug king (4)
19 Stay on the high sea (6)
21 Discounted picture damaged after commencement of cyclone (3-5)
23 Told, "Horribly reincarnated? Not nice!" (8)
26 He excitedly dashed behind model in city (6)
27 Blue ribbon on older cub is damaged (6,4)
28 Legendary vessel from Khandepar, Goa (4)

■ **DOWN**

1 Henchman having a small quantity followed by puzzled policeman after losing an article (10)
2 Shakespearean character loses head over partners giving speeches (8)
3 Ferocious fire breaking out in front of church (6)
4 Knight echoes, "Leg joint" (4)
5 Happily receives Western Elevated Railway Company direction about setter (8)
6 Jumped and crooned about Paul Revere initially (6)
7 Gloomy part of pilgrimage (4)
13 Vessel-in-charge gives garment (5)
15 Assume responsibility of redevelopment of a creek and ghat (4,6)
17 Giving away sodium can swallowed by canine (8)
18 Decaying ham and grass produce methane (5,3)
20 Roughen up sailor riding accidentally damaged e-boat at first (6)
22 Adds, "Kid's awake" (4,2)
24 For starters, admirable victory on Nile river (4)
25 Plaything found in Viceregal Lodge on return (4)

SUDOKU

							2	
		8		3				5
			1		7			4
6			8	7		3		
	2	7				1	5	
		3		2	5			6
7			6		8			
4				9		6		
	3							

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13574

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

1	7	6	2	8	4	3	9	5
9	2	5	3	6	1	4	7	8
4	3	8	9	5	7	6	2	1
6	1	2	7	4	5	8	3	9
5	4	3	8	1	9	7	6	2
8	9	7	6	3	2	5	1	4
2	5	9	4	7	3	1	8	6
7	8	1	5	9	6	2	4	3
3	6	4	1	2	8	9	5	7

FAITH

Lakshmana, a source of joy

There is a Periyazhvar pasuram on Rama for which Acharyas have given significant interpretations, said Akkarakkani Srinidhi in a discourse. Periyazhvar uses the word "*maatru thai*," (alternative mother), and in one interpretation, this is seen as a reference to Sumitra. Here, Sumitra is also asking Rama to go to the forest! Sumitra's reason for saying so is that since no one covets the forest, that is the best place for Rama to be in. Why should He stay on in Ayodhya, which Kaikeyi wants for her son?

Moreover, Sumitra knows Rama's needs will be taken care of by her son Lakshmana. Lakshamana is described by Valmiki as "*mitra nandanah*" – a source of joy to his friends. Lakshamana reveres Rama and so his service to Rama will be exemplary. So Sumitra confidently tells Rama to go to the forest. But, if Lakshmana is *mitra nandanah* in what way does he give happiness to those associated with him?

We get the answer in a pasuram by Kulasekhara Azhvar, where he says all Rama's dear ones went with Him to the forest. But we know it was not so. So what is Kulasekhara Azhvar trying to say here? Lakshmana going with Rama is equal to all His dear ones going with Him. When Rama leaves Ayodhya for the forest, all the citizens of Ayodhya want to accompany Him. But this is impractical, for they have their own responsibilities to attend to in Ayodhya. Besides, Rama had initially refused to take even Sita with Him. So there is no question of His allowing any of His subjects to go with Him to the forest. The only consolation for the people of Ayodhya is the fact that Lakshmana is going with Rama. They see Lakshamana as their representative, doing Rama's bidding. Thus Lakshmana sets their minds at rest, and so he may rightly be called *mitra nandanah*.

Fire sparks blast at port depot in Bangladesh killing 49 people

More than 300 injured after chemical explosion at facility with 4,000 containers

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SITAKUNDA

At least 49 people died and hundreds were injured after a fire sparked a huge chemical explosion at a shipping container depot in Bangladesh, officials said on Sunday.

The toll was expected to rise, with some of the more than 300 people injured in serious condition, officials said, while volunteers reported that there were more bodies inside the smouldering, wreckage-strewn facility.

The fire started late on Saturday at the depot in Sitakunda, which stores around 4,000 containers, many filled with garments destined for Western retailers. The facility is about 40 kilometres from the major southern port of Chittagong.

Deadly blaze A massive fire raging at a private chemical container depot in Bangladesh on Sunday. • AP

Far-felt impact

The blaze caused containers holding chemicals to explode, engulfing firefighters, volunteers and journalists in an inferno, hurtling people and debris through the air, and turning the night sky a blazing orange.

Buildings located kilometres away rattled with the force of the blast.

Elias Chowdhury, regional chief doctor, told *AFP* that the number of dead was 49 but would likely increase.

"The death toll will rise as the rescue work has not been completed yet," Mr. Chowdhury said.

"These people – including several journalists who were doing Facebook lives – are still not accounted for."

Firefighters continued to douse pockets of fire on Sunday afternoon, with television footage showing smoke still billowing from some containers, more than 19 hours after the fire began.

Reazul Karim, operations director of the fire department, said that at least seven firefighters died and at least four others were missing.

"Never in our fire department history have we lost so many firefighters in a single incident," Bharat Chandra, a former senior firefighter, told *AFP*.

Mujibur Rahman, the director of B.M. Container Depot, the firm operating the facility with around 600 workers, said that the cause of the initial fire was still unknown.

The container depot held hydrogen peroxide, fire service chief Brigadier General Main Uddin told reporters.

"We still could not control the fire because of the existence of this chemical," Mr. Uddin told reporters.

Mohammad Ali, 60, who runs a nearby grocery store, said the blast was deafening.

"A cylinder flew around half a kilometre from the fire spot to our small pond when the explosion occurred," he told *AFP*.

'Raining fireballs'

"The explosion sent fireballs into the sky. Fireballs were falling like rain. We were so afraid we immediately left our home to find refuge... We thought the fire would spread to our locality as it is very densely populated," he added.

Lorry driver Tofael Ahmed was standing inside the depot when the explosion occurred.

"The explosion just threw me some 10 metres from where I was standing," he said.

The army said it had deployed 250 troops to prevent chemicals flowing into the Indian Ocean by using sandbags.

Rakibul Alam Chowdhury from the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association said that about $ 110 million worth of garments were destroyed in the fire.

Russia hits Kyiv with missiles, Putin warns West on supplies

Airstrikes destroyed tanks donated from abroad: Kremlin

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KYIV

Russia took aim at Western military supplies for Ukraine with airstrikes in Kyiv on Sunday that it said destroyed tanks donated from abroad, as President Vladimir Putin warned that any Western deliveries of long-range rocket systems to Ukraine would prompt Moscow to hit "objects that we haven't yet struck."

The cryptic threat of a military escalation from the Russian leader didn't specify what the new targets might be, but it comes days after the United States announced plans to deliver $700 million of security assistance for Ukraine that includes four precision-guided, medium-range rocket systems, helicopters, Javelin anti-tank weapon systems, radars, tactical vehicles, spare parts and more.

Military analysts say Russia is hoping to overrun the embattled eastern Donbas region, where Russia-backed separatists have fought the Ukrainian government for years, before any weapons that might turn the tide arrive. The Pentagon said earlier this week it will take at least three weeks to get the precision U.S. weapons and trained troops onto the battlefield.

Counting losses: Residents chatting in front of a destroyed building in Borodianka in Kyiv region on Saturday. • REUTERS

'Mission Kyiv'

Russian forces pounded railway facilities and other infrastructure on early Sunday in Kyiv, which had previously seen weeks of eerie calm. Ukraine's nuclear plant operator, Energoatom, said one cruise missile buzzed the Pivdennoukrainsk nuclear plant, about 350 kilometres to the south, on its way to the capital – citing the dangers of such a near miss.

There was no immediate confirmation from Ukraine that the Russian airstrikes had destroyed tanks.

In a television interview, Mr. Putin lashed out at Western deliveries of weapons to Ukraine, saying they aim to prolong the conflict.

"All this fuss around additional deliveries of weapons has only one goal: To drag out the armed conflict as much as possible," Mr. Putin said, alluding to U.S. plans to supply multiple launch rocket systems to Kyiv. He insisted such supplies were unlikely to change much for the Ukrainian government, which he said was merely making up for losses of rockets of similar range that they already had.

If Kyiv gets longer-range rockets, he added, Moscow will "draw appropriate conclusions and use our means of destruction, which we have plenty of."

North Korea test-fires salvo of missiles

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEOUL

North Korea test-fired a barrage of short-range ballistic missiles from multiple locations toward the sea on Sunday, South Korea's military said, extending a provocative streak in weapons demonstrations this year that U.S. and South Korean officials say may culminate with a nuclear test explosion.

Possibly setting a single-day record for North Korean ballistic launches, eight missiles were fired in succession over 35 minutes from at least four different locations, including from western and eastern coastal areas and two inland areas north of and near the capital, Pyongyang, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

It said the missiles flew 110 to 670 kilometres at maximum altitudes of 25 to 80 kilometres.

Hours later, Japan and the U.S. conducted a joint ballistic missile exercise aimed at showing their "rapid response capability" to counter threats, Japan's Defense Ministry said.

Sung Kim, U.S. President's special envoy for North Korea, discussed the launches with South Korean officials while on a visit to Seoul.

Queen attends jubilee event in person

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Queen Elizabeth II on Sunday brought the curtain down on her historic Platinum Jubilee celebrations, making a rare public appearance on the last of four days of festivities and vowing to maintain her record-breaking reign.

The 96-year-old monarch, who has been dogged by problems with walking and standing, appeared for the first time in person since two showings on Thursday on the Buckingham Palace balcony after the Trooping the Colour military parade.

That effort forced her to pull out of a Thanksgiving church service on Friday, plus the Epsom Derby horse race and a star-studded concert on Saturday.

Dressed in green with a matching hat, her white gloved hand clutching a walking stick, she was flanked by the three future kings: princes Charles, William and George.

In a statement issued shortly after, the monarch said she had been "humbled and deeply touched" by the turnout for her Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

"While I may not have attended every event in person, my heart has been with you all; and I remain committed to serving you to the best of my ability," Britain's longest-serving sovereign added.

Five killed, two dozen injured in weekend U.S. mass shootings

Suspects open fire into a crowd in Philadelphia area

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PHILADELPHIA

Five persons were killed and two dozen others wounded in a pair of weekend mass shootings in the United States, the latest in a string of deadly gun attacks that have left lawmakers scrambling to tackle the crisis.

The shootings – on late Saturday in Philadelphia and on early Sunday in Chattanooga, Tennessee – further jolted a country facing a gun violence epidemic that has already claimed several thousand American lives this year and shows no signs of abating.

In Philadelphia, two men and a woman were killed when multiple people opened fire on a crowd at a popular nightlife area, Police Inspector D.F. Pace told reporters.

A storefront window with bullet holes at the crime scene in Philadelphia.

Multiple shooters

He said officers "observed several active shooters shooting into the crowd" of "hundreds of individuals enjoying South Street, as they do every single weekend."

Tennessee situation

A chaotic eruption of violence in Chattanooga resulted in 14 persons shot including two killed, while another person died and two more were injured after they were struck by vehicles fleeing the scene, police chief Celeste Murphy told reporters, adding "several" victims remained in critical condition.

The pre-dawn incident occurred near a nightclub in a downtown section of Chattanooga, a city of 1,80,000.

As of mid-Sunday no arrests had been made in either case, Ms. Murphy and Philadelphia media said.

Australia cites threat from Chinese jet

'Aircraft carried out dangerous manoeuvres on May 26'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

Australia on Sunday said a Chinese fighter jet carried out dangerous manoeuvres threatening the safety of one of its maritime surveillance planes over the South China Sea and forcing it to return to the base.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said his government expressed concern to China over the May 26 incident, which the Defense Ministry said took place in international airspace where a Chinese J-16 intercepted a P-8A Poseidon surveillance aircraft on routine patrol.

Defense Minister Richard Marles said the Chinese J-16 flew very close to the Australian plane and released flares and chaff that were ingested by the engines of the Poseidon, a converted Boeing 737-800. He said the crew of the P-8 responded professionally and returned the aircraft to its base.

There was no official response Sunday from Beijing.

Last month's incident comes amid increasingly aggressive behavior by the Chinese military in border areas and at sea against India, Canada, U.S. and Philippines.

China marks new space milestone

Astronauts dock at Tiangong space station which will be operational by 2022-end

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

Three Chinese astronauts docked at the country's space station on Sunday, the state broadcaster said, marking a new milestone in Beijing's drive to become a major space power.

The trio blasted off in a Long March-2F rocket at 0814 IMT from the Jiuquan launch centre in northwestern China's Gobi desert, said broadcaster *CCTV*.

The team is tasked with "completing in-orbit assembly and construction of the space station", as well as "commissioning of equipment" and conducting scientific experiments, state-run *CGTN* said on Saturday.

The spacecraft docked at the Tiangong station after about "seven hours of flight", *CCTV* reported.

Giant stride: The rocket carrying Shenzhou 14 spacecraft blasts off from the launch centre in Jiuquan on Sunday. • AP

Fully operational

Tiangong, which means "heavenly palace", is expected to become fully operational by the end of the year.

China's heavily promoted space programme has already seen the nation land a rover on Mars and send probes to the Moon.

The Shenzhou-14 crew is led by Air Force pilot Chen Dong, 43. The three-person crew's main challenge will be connecting the station's two lab modules to the main body.

Tiangong's second crew

Mr. Dong, along with fellow pilots Liu Yang and Cai Xuzhe, will become the second crew to spend six months aboard the Tiangong after the last returned to earth in April following 183 days on the space station.

Tiangong's core module entered orbit earlier last year and is expected to operate for at least a decade.

The completed station will be similar to the Soviet Mir station that orbited Earth from the 1980s until 2001.

Pakistan set to raise defence spending by 6%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's armed forces are likely to be allocated $7.6 billion in the Budget for the next fiscal year, about Rs. 83 billion higher than the current year, a media report said on Sunday.

Defence spending often comes under scrutiny at the time of the announcement of the annual Budget when allocations for various sectors are earmarked.

The allocation of Rs. 1.453 trillion ($7.6 billion) would be about Rs. 83 billion higher than the outgoing year's allocation of Rupees 1.37 trillion, an increase of almost 6%, the *Dawn* newspaper reported.

The increased amount will be consumed mostly by the allocation for employees-related expenses, salaries and allowances of servicemen.

Other heads of the Budget include civil works, which caters for the military infrastructure development; physical assets that relate to local purchases of arms and some imports and the related costs; and operating expenses, which cover costs incurred on transport, ration, training and treatment, the report said.

ASK US

BHAVANA ACHARYA

Q. I will shortly retire from government service. My pension corpus will be about ₹55 lakh and monthly pension is about ₹30,000. I have a family floater plan for ₹5 lakh. My children are undergraduates and wife is unemployed. We have our own house. I am expecting ₹10,000 from monthly rentals. How should I invest my pension benefits so as to attain wealth creation in the long term and get a small amount as monthly interest?

AJITH DAMODARAN

A. You need to split the corpus between income-generating and wealth-creating products. The amount that goes into each will depend on how much you will require to meet monthly expenses and how much you may need for your children's further education or weddings.

For income generation, Senior Citizens Savings Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana and RBI Floating Rate Bonds offer and lock you into interest rates better than fixed deposits and are very low risk. You can also consider government bonds at this time, as yields are high currently — use the RBI Retail Direct platform to invest in these bonds. However, these have long lock-ins. If you wish to diversify into shorter lock-in products, go for deposits from banks or small finance banks (SFBs). But keep it to ₹5 lakh in each SFB to maximise deposit insurance cover. For wealth creation, the best option is stock market-linked instruments. Low-risk and fixed-income instruments (like bonds and FDs) do not serve up superior returns, are tax-inefficient, and may not always offer compounding benefits. If you are willing to settle for lower returns and aren't going to be in the tax-paying income bracket, invest in higher-returning FDs or NCDs (cumulative option) from banks, small finance banks and top-rung NBFCs. You can also use the instruments mentioned above and be diligent in reinvesting all interest payouts.

However, if you're willing to take some risk and do some reading to understand the product, you can invest part of the corpus in simple equity index mutual funds that track the Nifty 50 stock market index. This will give you the returns that the Nifty 50 index delivers — you do not have to do any homework in understanding the fund strategy and suitability, and you do not have to track performance. You can additionally consider debt mutual funds that are more tax-efficient options than fixed deposits and bonds — but make sure to invest only in funds with high-quality portfolios.

Q. I am a 19-year-old student. At the end of my education, in seven years, I want to have grown my money in a smart manner. I want to invest ₹4,000 per month in mutual fund SIPs. I have a medium-to-low risk appetite. I've been thinking of index funds like the Nifty 50. I want to diversify across 3-4 funds, as I will not be able to manage more than that. Can you advise me?

DIYA LAVINA PICARDO

A. For ₹4,000 a month, you do not need 3-4 funds - one or two will suffice. Nifty 50 index funds are a good choice. You can invest the entire ₹4,000 there. If you are willing to raise the risk, you can add Nifty Midcap 150 index fund and invest ₹1,000 there. This will offer diversification and the opportunity to earn slightly higher returns over seven years. Be prepared to see ups and downs in these funds. If you want to cut the risk, invest the ₹1,000 in a balanced advantage fund.

Q. I am a 29-year-old professional. My monthly salary is ₹73,000. I have three LIC policies for me, my spouse and a 1-year-old daughter with a premium of ₹33,000 a year. I have SIPs of ₹20,000 a month, in 10 funds. I have an FD of ₹2 lakh and Sukanya Samridhi account for my daughter where I put an average of ₹50,000 a year. I have a long-term financial goal of reaching ₹2 crore within the next 18 years. What are the other investments I should start?

AADARSH

A. Please note that life insurance needs to be distinct from investments. Therefore, avoid taking on more LIC policies under the guise of investments. If you need to raise insurance cover, go for pure term policies. Continue with the Sukanya Samriddhi scheme as it is a good investment option. Your FD can be set aside to meet any emergencies — you can aim to maintain a balance equal to about six months' expenses in FDs for emergencies.

If your goal is to build ₹2 crore with SIPs, then ₹20,000 a month is unlikely to meet your target (assuming an annual 12% return).

Therefore, raise the SIP amount as income increases — even small increases can go a long way over the years. Use online step-up SIP calculators to get a better understanding.

In terms of products, your current mix between Sukanya Samriddhi, FDs and mutual funds is good diversification and you do not need to add further. However, without knowing which mutual funds you're investing in or your risk profile, commenting on whether your overall investments are balanced between risk and return potential will not be possible.

Some general observations are as follows - one, 10 funds for ₹20,000 are too many. Ideally, consolidate to about 5-6 funds. Else, avoid adding any more even if you up the investment amount — of course, with the caveat that they need to be quality funds.

Two, strike a balance between allocating to aggressive mid-cap/small-cap-oriented funds and large-cap-based funds. Your long time frame allows you to allocate to aggressive funds, but avoid going over 25-33% in such funds. Three, if you do not have debt funds, add short-duration, floater or corporate bond funds to reduce equity risk.

(The writer is Co-founder, PrimeInvestor.in)

Readers can e-mail queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. The experts on personal finance will answer select queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

Why insurance should be relationship based

Only an adviser can give a holistic view about policies and help you choose the right one

GURUNATHAN V.

Insurance customers today have a plethora of choices; they just have to pick and choose the insurance product they feel is suited to them.

The question is, as a buyer, are you confident enough to purchase what you want and after getting to know the product completely? Or is an adviser a good sounding board to have?

Many of us have a family doctor who is completely in the know of our family's health and requirements. It is easy for him or her to diagnose and make out prescriptions, because the fact-finding necessary for a good diagnosis has been done earlier, by virtue of knowing us well. Wouldn't you spend time checking references before you visit a new doctor nearby or use apps that promise solutions?

The reason you do this is that you long for comfort, guidance and a personal touch.

Why is it any different for when it comes to insurance advice? This should ideally come from a person who knows your insurance health, seeks facts objectively, does a thorough need analysis and is someone whom you trust! As consumers of insurance products, we have two major challenges viz., time and the knowledge in executing it. When these challenges are addressed by the trusted relationship with your insurance adviser, you get that all-important, anytime accessibility with a personal touch.

It could be an insurance broking company that is in regular touch with you and advises you, or an individual. In today's context, the customer gets alluring options on insurance products with price as the focus. Price may be an important factor, but it is not everything.

Only after buying a policy for the wrong reasons, or with a variant you hadn't bargained for, does one understand what errors of understanding had been committed. This bubbles up only at the time of making claims. When insurance is sold based on price, it becomes a commodity. Unfortunately for many first-time buyers, insurance comes across as a commodity. Insurance should be all about terms and conditions. For a given set of covers or terms, you pay a certain price.

Motor policies

In motor policies, the individual, in the excitement of driving away the new, wheeled wonder, does not see whether his policy covers the right IDV (Insured Declared Value), add-ons viz., nil depreciation cover, return to invoice, engine protector or unnamed passenger cover, to name a few important covers.

Only at the time of total loss, he may realise the confusion on the IDV of his vehicle. By tweaking the IDVs, popular sites may offer lower price with lower IDV, but during claims, one may realise the shortcomings of the policy leaving him to shell out more money. In fact, one may not be sure whether the model, sub-model or variants are captured correctly in the policy. An adviser can help here.

The ultimate aim is to get guidance from your adviser who understands your needs well rather than from a site, an app or an anonymous telecaller

Health insurance is no different. Top-ups, super top-ups, home insurance and overseas mediclaim offer a rich but confusing variety of options for the retail consumer. Only an insurance professional can address each of these, specific to the needs of the individual in question. A web site or machinised callers are poor substitutes.

Technology is very encouraging today but should be available for the fulfilment of the transactions. You can get comparisons done with the aid of technology, but only your own insurance adviser can give clarification and advice on, for example, the proportional medical cost in a health policy, pre-existing condition clauses, room-rent restriction clause, which insurance covers suit you and your family, the difference between a top-up cover and super top-ups, which wholesome product is available at what price and the like.

For home insurance, good questions to ask are around products covering machinery break downs (MBDs), as electrical breakdowns are not covered under MBDs by a few firms.

In life cover, the maximum level of sum insured, expanding it with add-on covers, whether they are linked to investments, whether they are tagged 'participating' or 'non-participating', are guaranteed and at what internal rate of return should the insured blend his life cover with investment, are all questions an adviser can help with . Relationship-based insurance can help not only the retail customer, but also enterprises that face more complex risks.

A trusted, relationship-based advice is from a person who is not out to make a quick buck. If the product allows him a respectable fee, he will take it; if not, a good insurance broker will take that too in his stride. At a critical moment, a consumer is better off calling his trusted broker than some anonymous voice at the other end of a 1-800 number. Insurance is based on trust and ought not to be sold as a product.

(The writer is Director and CEO, TVS Insurance Broking Limited)

THINK INVESTOR: REAL ESTATE

Realty investments: now, later or never?

Though retirees can aspire to rental income, they must also consider the pitfalls

VENKATESH BANGARUSWAMY

Real estate investment is more appropriate for retirees than for working executives. In this article, we discuss some reasons that support this argument.

Real estate investment refers to any land or building from which you expect to earn rental income or capital appreciation. If you are a working executive, your investments should preferably be in financial and not physical assets.

Earlier generations made their fortunes from real-estate. These individuals could manage physical investments because they typically worked with the same employer over a life time and retired in the same city in which they started off.

The labour market is different now. You could shift jobs, requiring you to relocate to a different city or country. What will you do with your real-estate investment? It is in this context that portfolio portability becomes important. This refers to the need to have portable investments (financial or non-physical investments) to align with the portable nature of your employment.

Then, there is the argument about low returns on real estate. Given the high cost of land, rental yields are low. In any case, working executives need capital appreciation, not income returns. Moderate investment in land may be justified based on the argument that land has supply-side constraint. You should, however, be mindful of lumpy investments in land, the security of your property and the fact that such investments are not easy to convert into cash.

Making sense: Investments in a house would be meaningful if the retiree's children also live in India. •GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Stable income

What makes real estate an optimal investment for retirees? For one, it provides stable income, acting as a close substitute for the monthly income retirees earned during their working life. For another, rental income can increase with inflation.

This does not change the argument that rental yields are low. But the difference is that working executives should typically look for high-risk, high-return investments whereas retirees should prefer stable-income products. That said, retirees should be mindful of the following factors before buying real estate as part of retirement income portfolio.

One, rental yields are a function of the location and the condition of the property. So, buying a property closer to retirement could help retirees fetch market rentals. But this also means buying the property with full payment as individuals closer to retirement are unlikely to get home loans.

Two, generating stable income from the property also means that if a tenant vacates, it is important to find another quickly, to keep the income flowing. Three, maintaining the property is important to generate market rentals. Annual maintenance costs could be high.

Finally, real-estate investments could be more meaningful if the retiree's children also live in India. This is key because these investments may require liquidation or upgradation after the lifetime of the retiree. Selling property or continually making repairs is not easy when children live abroad.

Real estate is a lumpy asset. Yes, it is perceived as safe because there is no visibility of real-time prices as in stock markets. In addition, real estate is a physical asset; it is easier to relate wealth to physical assets (real estate and gold) than to financial assets (equity and bonds).

But real estate is pricey today. Further, employment opportunities could take you beyond your home country. So, investments that worked for the previous generations may not work for you. So, whether you are a working executive or a soon-to-be retiree, consider the associated risks and irritants before investing in real estate.

(The writer offers training programmes for individuals for managing their personal investments)

TECH TRAIL: PRECIOUS METALS

Gold, silver lack lustre

B. KRISHNAKUMAR

Precious metals remained lacklustre in May and closed on a weak note for the second month in succession. The strengthening of the U.S. dollar along with the rise in U.S. treasury yields dented sentiment around precious metals.

As a result, Comex gold lost 3.3% in May to close at $1,848.4 an ounce. Comex silver saw a much deeper cut of 6.05% to settle at $21.69 an ounce.

Mirroring the global trend, MCX gold futures fell 2.2% to close at ₹50,847 per 10 gm. MCX silver futures dropped 5% to settle at ₹61,125 a kg, at the end of May.

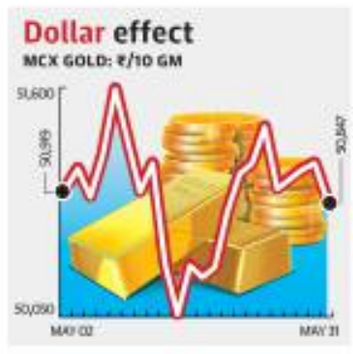
The Comex gold price dropped below the lower end of the prior trading range of $1,880-$2,005. As anticipated, this breach triggered a further slide, and the price tested the target zone of $1,800-1,810 that was mentioned last month.

Comex gold dropped to a low of $1,785 on May 16 and has since recovered over the last couple of weeks.

The short-term outlook remains weak and a drop below $1,825 will confirm the resumption of the recent downtrend. Unless the price moves above $1,925, a slide to $1,770-1,780 would be the preferred outlook.

The price action in Comex silver was in line with expectations. As observed last month, the price ruled weak and fell to the target range of $20.40-20.50. After recording a low of $20.4 on May 13, the price managed to recover some ground in the past few weeks.

The short-term outlook for silver remains weak and the price is likely to slide to the next target of $20.2-20.4. This view would be invalidated if the silver price closes above $23.5.



In sync with the global trend, MCX gold, too, ruled weak last month. The short-term outlook remains negative and the MCX gold price could drop to ₹48,500-49,000 per 10 gm. Only a move above ₹53,500 would invalidate the short-term negative outlook.

As observed last month, MCX silver remained weak and fell to the then mentioned target zone of ₹57,500-58,000. The short-term outlook remains weak and a fall to ₹57,000-57,500 appears likely. A fall below ₹60,500 would confirm the short-term negative outlook. Only a close above ₹64,500 would invalidate the negative outlook for MCX silver.

To summarise, precious metals have breached the lower end of the prior trading range, suggesting short-term weakness. There is a case for a slide to the lower target zones mentioned above.

(The writer is a Chennai-based analyst / trader. Views and opinion featured in this column are based on the analysis of short-term price movement in gold and silver futures at COMEX & Multi Commodity Exchange of India. This is not meant to be trading or investment advice)

Bank fixed deposit rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%) Highest Slab	1-year tenure	3-year tenure	5-year tenure
SMALL FINANCE BANKS				
AU Small Finance Bank	6.75	5.25	6.75	6.75
Capital Small Finance Bank	6.30	6.00	6.00	6.00
Equitas Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.10	6.50	6.00
ESAF Small Finance Bank	7.25	5.50	5.75	5.25
Fincare Small Finance Bank	7.00	6.25	6.50	7.00
Jana Small Finance Bank	7.00	6.50	6.75	6.75
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	7.00	6.50	7.00	6.75
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	7.10	6.50	6.50	6.25
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	7.25	6.90	6.75	6.75
PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS				
Axis Bank	5.75	5.25	5.60	5.75
Bandhan Bank	6.25	5.75	6.25	5.60
CSB Bank	6.00	5.00	5.75	5.75
DBS Bank	5.75	5.10	5.65	5.75
DCB Bank	6.60	6.00	6.60	6.60
HDFC Bank	5.75	5.10	5.40	5.60
ICICI Bank	5.75	5.10	5.40	5.60
IDFC First Bank	6.25	6.00	6.00	6.25
IndusInd Bank	6.50	6.00	6.50	6.50
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	5.50	5.20	5.45	5.50
Karnataka Bank	5.50	5.25	5.40	5.40
Karur Vysya Bank	5.80	5.40	5.65	5.80
Kotak Mahindra Bank	5.75	5.40	5.75	5.75
Nainital Bank	5.40	5.20	5.35	5.40
RBL Bank	6.50	6.25	6.30	6.30
SBM Bank India	6.60	6.00	5.85	5.85
South Indian Bank	5.80	5.00	5.50	5.80
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	5.60	5.25	5.60	5.60
PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS				
Bank of Baroda	5.35	5.00	5.20	5.35
Bank of India	5.20	5.00	5.20	5.20
Bank of Maharashtra	5.00	5.00	4.90	4.90
Canara Bank	5.75	5.30	5.70	5.75
Indian Bank	5.35	5.10	5.35	5.35
Indian Overseas Bank	5.45	5.15	5.45	5.45
Punjab National Bank	5.25	5.10	5.10	5.25
Punjab & Sind Bank	5.40	5.15	5.40	5.40
State Bank of India	5.50	5.10	5.45	5.50
Union Bank of India	5.50	5.00	5.30	5.40
FOREIGN BANKS				
Citibank	3.50	2.75	3.50	3.50
Deutsche Bank	7.00	5.25	5.75	7.00
HSBC Bank	5.50	3.10	4.00	4.00

Home loan interest rates

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
			(in %)
PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS			
State Bank of India	7.05-7.85	7.05-7.85	7.05-7.85
Bank of Baroda	6.90-8.40	6.90-8.40	6.90-8.65
Union Bank of India	6.90-8.65	6.90-8.85	6.90-8.85
Punjab National Bank	6.95-8.35	6.90-8.05	6.90-8.00
Bank of India	6.90-8.75	6.90-8.75	6.90-8.75
Canara Bank	7.05-11.85	7.05-11.85	7.05-11.85
UCO Bank	6.90-7.10	6.90-7.10	6.90-7.10
Bank of Maharashtra	6.80-8.70	6.80-8.85	6.80-8.95
Punjab and Sind Bank	6.90-8.00	6.90-8.00	6.90-8.00
Indian Overseas Bank	7.05-7.40	7.15-7.40	7.30-7.40
PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	>=7.00	>=7.00	>=7.00
ICICI Bank	7.10-7.95	7.10-7.95	7.10-7.95
Axis Bank	7.00-11.90	7.00-11.90	7.00-7.35
HSBC Bank	6.85-7.75	6.85-7.75	6.85-7.75
South Indian Bank	7.75-10.50	7.75-10.50	7.75-10.50
Karur Vysya Bank	7.15-9.35	7.15-9.35	7.15-9.35
Karnataka Bank	7.50-8.75	7.50-8.75	7.50-8.85
Federal Bank	8.05-8.10	8.10-8.15	8.15-8.20
Dhanlaxmi Bank	7.85-9.00	7.85-9.00	7.85-9.00
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	8.25	8.25	8.25
Bandhan Bank	6.80-13.50	6.80-12.15	6.80-12.15
RBL Bank	9.40-11.10	7.80-8.20	7.80-8.10
CSB Bank	8.10	8.10	8.63
HOUSING FINANCE COMPANIES (HFCS)			
LIC Housing Finance	6.90-8.00	6.90-8.20	6.90-8.40
HDFC Ltd.	7.05-8.15	7.05-8.40	7.05-8.50
Bajaj Housing Finance	6.75 onwards	6.75 onwards	6.75 onwards
Tata Capital	>=7.15	>=7.15	>=7.15
PNB Housing Finance	6.99-16.75	6.99-16.75	7.15-10.15
GIC Housing Finance	>=7.24	>=7.24	>=7.24
Repco Home Finance	>=7.15	>=7.15	>=7.15
Indiabulls Housing	>=7.60	>=7.60	>=7.60
Aditya Birla Capital	9.00-12.50	9.00-12.50	9.00-12.50
ICICI Home Finance	>=9.20	>=9.20	>=9.20
Godrej Housing Finance	6.94-9.99	6.94-9.99	6.94-9.99
Home First Finance	8.00-18.00	8.00-18.00	8.00-18.00

Rates as on June 2

Source: Paisabazaar.com

Relentless Nadal wins No. 22, raises the stratospheric bar even higher

The 'King of Clay' demolishes Ruud to move two clear of Federer and Djokovic in the all-time Major tally, and extend his record at Roland-Garros to 14 crowns

One foot in: Nadal — who won the first two Slams of the year for the first time in his career — is halfway to a rare calendar men's Grand Slam, which was last achieved by Rod Laver in 1969. •AFP

Day in numbers

2 Nadal, with 22 Majors, is now joint-second with Graf in the list of most Slam singles titles in the Open Era. Serena leads with 23

3 Nadal is the third man to beat four top-10 players at a Slam. Previous: Federer at 2017 Aus Open and Wilander at 1982 French Open

5 Nadal has won his last five Major finals, the second-best streak in his career after the seven he won from Roland-Garros 2008 to Roland-Garros 2011

8 Number of Slams Nadal has won after turning 30, joint-top with Djokovic

17 The exact number of years between Nadal's first Major (2005 French Open) and the latest (2022 French Open)

19 This is the 19th straight year Nadal has won a title on clay

36 At 36, Nadal is the oldest men's singles champion in Roland-Garros history, going past Andres Gimeno who won the 1972 edition aged 34 years and 10 months

FRENCH OPEN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Rafael Nadal won a 14th French Open and record-extending 22nd Grand Slam title on Sunday with a straight-sets rout of Casper Ruud to become the oldest male champion at Roland-Garros and he vowed to "keep fighting".

In a disappointing final, 36-year-old Nadal won 6-3, 6-3, 6-0 with victory coming 17 years to the day since he claimed his first French Open as a 19-year-old in 2005.

Nadal won the last 11 games of the final and is now two Slams ahead of old rivals Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer with Sunday's victory coming against all the odds.

Nadal, the oldest winner in Paris since a 34-year-old Andre Gimeno in 1972, had not been certain of taking part after a chronic left foot injury, which has plagued him throughout his career, flared up again.

He also needed the best part of a gruelling 12 hours to see off Felix Auger-Aliassime, Novak Djokovic and Alexander Zverev in the previous three rounds.

"I don't know what I would do in terms of injuries if it wasn't for the team, my family and everyone around me," said Nadal.

"I would've already retired much before if it wasn't for you.

"I never believed that I'd be here at 36, being competitive again. Being here means a lot to me on the most important court in my career. It helps me to keep going.

"For me, it's incredible to play here. It's an incredible feeling. I don't know what can happen in the future, but I'm going to keep fighting to try to keep going."

His two-hour 18-minute win on Sunday took his record at the tournament to 112 wins against just three losses and also put him halfway to a rare calendar men's Grand Slam last achieved by Rod Laver in 1969.

"The most important thing is to congratulate Rafa," said Ruud.

"You are a true champion. This is the first time I have faced you so now I know what it's like to be the victim! There will be many others.

"You have taken me into your academy with open arms and you are a true inspiration to me. We all hope you continue for some more time."

THE RESULTS

Finals: Men: 5-Nadal (Esp) bt 8-Ruud (Nor) 6-3, 6-3, 6-0.
Women's doubles: Garcia & Mladenovic (Fra) bt 8-Gauff & Pegula (USA) 2-6, 6-3, 6-2.

'I can't keep competing with the foot asleep'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PARIS

Rafael Nadal revealed after winning his 14th French Open title on Sunday that he needed multiple injections during the tournament to dull the pain in his left foot.

The Spaniard added that unless he can find a solution for the chronic problem, he won't be able to play at Wimbledon and wouldn't be sure about his future in tennis.

Nadal said he received anesthetiser shots for nerves in the foot that left it feeling numb. He said he did it because "Roland Garros is Roland Garros."

The 36-year-old said he will try some new treatments over the next week to see whether that might allow him to enter Wimbledon. "It's obvious," Nadal said, "that I can't keep competing with the foot asleep."

Nadal said if these new treatments don't work, he will need to consider having "major surgery".

LIVE TELECAST

NBA: Sports 18, Voot Select, Vh1, MTV & Jio TV, 5.30 a.m.
Ranji Trophy: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 9.30 a.m.
KIYG 2022: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 9.30 a.m.
Zimbabwe vs Afghanistan: 2nd ODI, FanCode, 12.45 p.m.
UEFA Nations League: Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD) & Sony LIV, 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

IN BRIEF

Rahmat and Nabi shine; Afghanistan goes 1-0 up

HARARE

Rahmat Shah hit 94 and Mohammad Nabi took four wickets as Afghanistan beat host Zimbabwe by 60 runs in the first of three ODIs on Saturday.

The Afghans totalled 276 for five before bowling out the host for 216.

The scores:

Afghanistan 276/5 in 50 overs (Rahmat Shah 94, Hashmatullah Shahidi 88, Rashid Khan 39) bt Zimbabwe 216 in 50 overs (Innocent Kaia 39, Craig Ervine 30, Sikandar Raza 67, Mohd. Nabi 4/34).

Root emerges the hero as England wins Lord's Test in style

His unbeaten century the highlight of a dramatic comeback for the host as it chases down 277 with five wickets in hand

NZ IN ENGLAND

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Joe Root scored an unbeaten century as England capped a dramatic fightback to win the first Test against New Zealand by five wickets at Lord's on Sunday.

England, set 277 to win, finished on 279 for five, with former captain Root 115 not out after the hosts had slumped to 69 for four.

Landmark

Victory, achieved with more than a day to spare, was just England's second win in 18 Tests and gave it a 1-0 lead in the three-match series against World Test champion New Zealand.

Root became just the 14th batsman and only second from England to reach the landmark total of 10,000 career Test runs when he completed his 26th hundred at this level.

He was also the joint youngest player to achieve the feat, equalling retired England captain Alastair Cook's record of 31 years 157 days.

Root received excellent support from wicketkeeper Ben Foakes (32 not out) in an unbroken stand of 120, with the pair denying New Zealand a breakthrough after England resumed Sunday on the overnight 216 for five. This was an ideal way for England to start life under the new leadership duo of captain Ben Stokes, who made a valuable 54 on Saturday, and Test coach Brendon McCullum, the former New Zealand captain.

Root on Mt. 10K

	M	Inns	Runs	HS	Avg	100s/50s
Overall	118	218	10015	254	49.57	26/53
Home	60	107	5135	254	52.93	15/25
Away	55	105	4593	228	45.93	11/25
Neutral	3	6	287	88	57.40	0/3
BY OPPONENT						
	M	Inns	Runs	HS	Avg	100s/50s
India	24	43	2353	218	60.33	8/10
Australia	29	56	2016	180	38.76	3/16
West Indies	14	25	1222	182*	53.13	5/5
South Africa	12	23	1164	190	52.90	2/9
New Zealand	14	26	1118	226	44.72	3/5
Pakistan	12	21	1010	254	56.11	1/6
Sri Lanka	10	18	1001	228	58.88	4/1
Bangladesh	2	4	98	56	24.50	0/1
Ireland	1	2	33	31	16.50	0/0

SOURCE: ESPNCRICINFO

SCOREBOARD

New Zealand — 1st innings: 132.
England — 1st innings: 141.
New Zealand — 2nd innings: 285.
England — 2nd innings: Alex Lees b Jamieson 20, Zak Crawley c Southee b Jamieson 9, Ollie Pope b Boult 10, Joe Root (not out) 115, Jonny Bairstow b Jamieson 16, Ben Stokes c Blundell b Jamieson 54, Ben Foakes (not out) 32; Extras (b-6, lb-9, nb-2, w-6): 23; Total (for five wkts. in 78.5 overs): 279.
Fall of wickets: 1-31, 2-32, 3-46, 4-69, 5-159.
New Zealand bowling: Southee 23.5-5-87-0, Boult 24-3-73-1, Jamieson 25-4-79-4, de Grandhomme 3.5-1-3-0, Mitchell 0.1-0-0-0, Ajaz 2-0-22-0.
England won by five wickets; **MoM:** Root; England leads three-Test series 1-0.

Breaking the shackles: Root not only guided his team to victory but also crossed the 10,000-run mark. •GETTY IMAGES

Hungary beats tired England

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

A tired England side went down to a surprise 1-0 defeat in Hungary in the UEFA Nations League on Saturday, while Germany had to come from behind to draw 1-1 with an inexperienced Italy team.

RB Leipzig star Dominik Szoboszlai scored the only goal of the game from the penalty spot in the second half in Budapest as Hungary beat England for the first time since 1962.

The results:

League A: Group 3: Hungary 1 (Szoboszlai 66-pen) bt England 0; Italy 1 (Pellegrini 70) drew with Germany 1 (Kimmich 73).

League B: Group 1: Armenia 1 (Spertsyan 74) bt Republic of Ireland 0.

Group 3: Finland 1 (Pukki 45+1-pen) drew with Bosnia and Herzegovina 1 (Prevljak 90+3); Montenegro 2 (Mugosa 66, Marko Vukcevic 87) bt Romania 0.

Maharashtra leads with nine gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANCHKULA

Weightlifter Kajol Sargar, daughter of a tea vendor, became the first gold medallist at the Khelo India Youth Games as defending champion Maharashtra surged ahead in the medals table here on Sunday.

The 16-year-old from Sangli lifted a total of 113 kg (50kg in snatch + 63kg in clean & jerk) in the women's 40kg category to kick off Maharashtra's march. She had won a bronze medal in the Youth Nationals in 2021.

Maharashtra scooped nine gold medals early in the morning, but by late evening, host Haryana had clinched six gold to race to the second spot.

Haryana garnered the most number of medals, though, capturing 23 (5 gold, 6 silver, 12 bronze) to Maharashtra's 17 (9 gold, 4 silver, 4 bronze).

On a day full of exciting twists and turns, two new youth national records were also created in weightlifting.

Maharashtra bagged three out of four gold on offer in weightlifting, and also three yellow metals in yoga and one in cycling.

CWG our next target, say Chirag and Satwiksairaj

The 2024 Paris Olympics is also on the duo's radar

On a mission: Satwiksairaj and Chirag look to enter the top five soon. •K. MURALI KUMAR

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

After playing a big role in Team India's historic Thomas Cup triumph, Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy are focussed on winning medals in major international competitions.

To win gold at the Commonwealth Games (CWG) at Birmingham next month would be an ideal start to this next phase of their journey. The duo had finished as runner-up in the previous CWG edition, at Gold Coast in Australia.

"The CWG is our next target. The CWG is followed by the World Championships. These are the two big events we are focused on," Chirag said at the launch event of the Grand Prix Badminton League here.

On the radar

The World No. 8 pair also has the 2024 Paris Olympics on their radar. "We can definitely aim for a medal at Paris. The Olympics is about two years away, and that is our long-term goal," Chirag said.

"We want to enter the top five in the world rankings. This is very much achievable. If we consistently defeat the top pairs in the world, we can definitely do it," Chirag said. Chirag and Satwiksairaj will benefit from having former world number 1 Mathias Boe in their corner. Boe, an Olympic medallist in men's doubles, acts as their doubles coach.

Satwiksairaj explained that the Thomas Cup win has raised the profile of the duo.

"It's great to see people recognise us when we go to malls and others places. People have begun to follow badminton closely after the Thomas Cup. We also went to the Prime Minister's house. That was a great day," Satwiksairaj said.

Indian men triumph

Rally to defeat Poland in the final

Unstoppable: India ruled the roost in hockey 5s. •TWITTER

FIH HOCKEY 5S

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LAUSANNE

India made a stunning comeback from being three-goal down to defeat Poland 6-4 in a pulsating final and clinch the inaugural FIH Hockey 5s championship here on Sunday.

India, which had topped the five-team league standings with three wins and one draw, ended its campaign with an unbeaten record.

This was India's second win of day over the same opponent. India had beaten Poland, which finished second with two wins and as many losses, 6-2 in a round-robin league match.

India was stunned for a while after Poland pumped in three goals without reply in the first five minutes through Mateusz Nowakowski (first), Wojciech Rutkowski (fifth) and captain Robert Pawlak (fifth). But the team regrouped quickly with Sanjay and captain Gurinder Singh finding the target in the eighth and ninth minutes respectively. India surged ahead 4-3 after fine field goals from Dhami Boby Singh (11th) and Raheel Mohammed (13th). Raheel (17th) and Boby struck their respective second goals to complete the formalities.

Earlier, India also outplayed Malaysia 7-3.

The Indian women's team, however, failed to make the final after drawing 4-4 with South Africa in the second match after beating host Switzerland 4-3.

Dhanalakshmi surprises Hima

Wins 100-200m double at Sprint and Relay Cup

SPORTS BUREAU

Tamil Nadu's S. Dhanalakshmi shocked Hima Das in the women's 200m and topped the 100m at the seventh International Sprint and Relay Cup in Erzurum, Turkey on Saturday.

Meanwhile Noah Nirmal Tom won the men's 400m in 45.83s while National record-holder Muhammed Anas, who was coming back from an injury, was ninth in 46.42s. Indians swept the women's 400m medals with Dandi Jyothika (53.47s), V. Subha and Summy finishing in that order.

It was the first competition for the quartermilers in the National camp after reaching Antalya in April.

Prominent quartermilers Anjali Devi, who last ran the 400m in 2019 the year when she also competed in the Doha World Championships, and V.K. Vismaya, the 2018 women's 4x400m relay gold medallist, skipped the event.

The results (winners and Indian performances):

Men: 200m: 1. Milad Naseh Jahani (IRI) 21.04s, 5. Akash Kumar 21.21.

400m: 1. Noah Nirmal Tom 45.83s, 3. Arokia Rajiv 46.01, 5. Muhammed Ajmal 46.04, 6. Naganathan Pandi 46.05, 9. Muhammed Anas 46.42, 12. Bharath Sridhar 46.86.

400m hurdles: 1. Mahdi Pirjahan (IRI) 49.72s, 2. T. Santhosh Kumar 50.06, 3. A. Dharun 50.07.

Women: 100m: 1. S. Dhanalakshmi 11.26s, 2. Hima Das 11.59, 3. M.V. Jilna 11.75, 7. N.S. Simi 12.03, 8. P.D. Anjali 12.12.

200m: 1. S. Dhanalakshmi 23.26s, 2. Hima Das 23.51, 4. M.V. Jilna 24.65, 5. P.D. Anjali 24.76. **400m:** 1. Dandi Jyothika 53.47s, 2. V. Subha 54.17, 3. Summy 54.47.

Dhanalakshmi. •FILE PHOTO

Heavyweights will look to pull their weight

Karnataka, UP players have to shake off IPL effects and switch to red-ball mode

On the ball! Captain Manish Pandey, left), leads the squad's training session. •R. MURALI KUMAR

Play resumes

As the climactic phase of the Ranji Trophy begins on Monday, the teams that will battle it out in the knockouts

THE QUARTERFINAL LINE-UP (JUNE 6-10)

- Bengal vs. Jharkhand
- Mumbai vs. Uttarakhand
- Karnataka vs. Uttar Pradesh
- Punjab vs. Madhya Pradesh

Semifinals: June 14-18 | Final: June 22-26

ARCHITECTS OF THE TEAMS' PROGRESS

Bengal	**Punjab**	**Uttar Pradesh**
Anustup Majumdar 6 inns, 242 runs	Mandeep Singh 4 inns, 358 runs	Priyam Garg 6 inns, 301 runs
Mukesh Kumar 6 inns, 15 wkts	Baltej Singh 6 inns, 18 wkts	Ankit Rajpoot 5 inns, 12 wkts
Mumbai	**Jharkhand**	**Madhya Pradesh**
Sarfaraz Khan 4 inns, 551 runs	Kumar Kushagra 6 inns, 437 runs	Yash Dubey 4 inns, 422 runs
Shams Mulani 6 inns, 29 wkts	Shahbaz Nadeem 7 inns, 18 wkts	Gaurav Yadav 4 inns, 12 wkts
Karnataka	**Uttarakhand**	Kumar Kartikeya 5 inns, 12 wkts
K.V. Siddharth 5 inns, 358 runs	Kunal Chandela 6 inns, 226 runs	
Prasidh Krishna 4 inns, 15 wkts	Mayank Mishra 6 inns, 16 wkts	

All matches at Bengaluru

SOURCE: ESPNCRICINFO

RANJI TROPHY

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

Big names will look to stand tall when Karnataka takes on Uttar Pradesh in their Ranji Trophy quarterfinal at the Alur ground here from Monday.

The home team is led by experienced batter Manish Pandey, who will feature in his 95th First Class match. Opener Mayank Agarwal returns to the squad, and will look to make amends for a poor run in the IPL.

Southpaw Devdutt Padikkal is another proven performer.

Karun Nair, whose unbeaten 175 against Jammu and Kashmir in the group stage provided hope after a long lean patch, will find a middle-order spot.

In the absence of Prasidh Krishna, away on National duty, the bowling attack will be spearheaded by pacer Ronit More and off-spinner K. Gowtham. The support cast – V. Koushik, V. Vyshak, M. Venkatesh, K. Vidwath and others – are fairly inexperienced.

On the bowling line-up, Karnataka bowling coach S. Arvind said, "They are promising, they know the conditions and how to utilise it. The youngsters may not have played First Class cricket, but they come with experience from the under-25 competition (C.K. Nayudu Trophy). They know the lengths they need to bowl, and have studied the batsmen's weaknesses as well."

Uttar Pradesh will look for contributions from established players. Priyam Garg featured in only two games for Sunrisers Hyderabad in IPL 2022, but he will hope to continue his good form in the red-ball format.

Kolkata Knight Riders' Rinku Singh, who hit 67 and 78 n.o. to power Uttar Pradesh past Maharashtra in the last group stage match, is the batting mainstay.

Fast bowler Ankit Rajpoot is the side's leading wicket-taker (12 wickets).

With the city expected to receive heavy rains this week, the quarterfinal could be curtailed or washed out. In the event of a no-result, Karnataka will progress due to its higher 'Run Quotient'.

Last Wish claims feature event

BENGALURU: Dr. Suresh Chintamaneni's Last Wish (Sandesh up) won the DT Racing & Breeding LLP Juvenile Million, the chief event of the races held here on Sunday (June 5). The winner is trained by Neil Devaney.

THE RESULTS:

1. ENDORSEMENT PLATE (1,400m), rated 00 to 25: **DIVINE RAY** (Richard Oliver) 1, War Eagle (Arvind K) 2, Ultimate Power (Vishal B) 3 and Noble Ruler (A. Prakash) 4. 12-3/4, 3-1/4 and Shd. Im 28.38s. ₹51 (w), 19, 61 and 245 (p), SHP: 182, THP: 391, FP: 2,154, Q: 859, Trinella: 64,056, Exacta: 68,217 (carried over). Favourite: Bramastram. Owner: Ms. Ameeta Mehra. Trainer: Darius Byramji.

2. RICHELIEU PLATE (Div. II), (1,400m), rated 20 to 45, 4-y-o & over: **DRAGON'S GOLD** (Richard Oliver) 1, Star Domination (Ravan) 2, Tyto Alba (Rajesh K) 3 and Eco Friendly (Arvind K) 4. 14-1/4, 1-1/2 and 3/4. Im 27.28s. ₹25 (w), 15, 19 and 16 (p), SHP: 65, THP: 37, FP: 298, Q: 195, Trinella: 1,163 and 374, Exacta: 9,703 and 6,654. Favourite: In A Breeze. Owners: Mr. Mukul A. Sonawala & The Estate Of Late R.R. Byramji. Trainer: Pravati Byramji.

3. YOUNG RAJPUT PLATE (1,600m), rated 20 to 45: **STAR COMET** (C.S. Jodha) 1, Embosom (J.H. Arul) 2, Cyrenius (Sandesh) 3 and Turkoman (Hindu S) 4. 2-1/2, 4 and 3/4. Im 41.61s. ₹64 (w), 17, 78 and 12 (p), SHP: 299, THP: 57, FP: 4,985, Q: 1,614, Trinella: 9,905 and 1,061, Exacta: 87,052. Favourite: Cyrenius. Owner: Mr. M.A.M Ramaswamy Chettiar Of Chettinad Charitable Trust. Trainer: S. Ganapathy.

4. K.N. GURUSWAMY MEMORIAL CUP (1,600m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms): **ALL ATTRACTION** (Akshay K) 1, Prague (Trevor) 2, Sadler's Legacy (Yash) 3 and Twilight Tornado (J.H. Arul) 4. 3-1/2, 1-3/4 and 3/4. Im 41.48s. ₹36 (w), 16, 15 and 14 (p), SHP: 41, THP: 54, FP: 195, Q: 71, Trinella: 248 and 104, Exacta: 4,140 and 3,943. Favourite: Sadler's Legacy. Owner: M/S. Kunal Gupta Stud Farm LLP. Trainer: V. Lokanath.

5. DT RACING & BREEDING LLP JUVENILE MILLION (1,400m), 3-y-o, (Terms): **LAST WISH** (Sandesh) 1, Supernatural (P.S. Chouhan) 2, Mojito (N.S. Parmar) 3 and King Louis (Trevor) 4. 3/4, 3/4 and Nk. Im 27.74s. ₹60 (w), 26 and 10 (p), SHP: 40, THP: 49, FP: 121, Q: 49, Trinella: 1,291 and 612, Exacta: 2,962 and 1,481. Favourite: Supernatural. Owner: Dr. Suresh Chintamaneni. Trainer: Neil Devaney.

6. ASTOUNDING PLATE (1,200m), rated 20 to 45: **THE STRENGTH** (P. Siddaraju) 1, Chul Bul Rani (Salman) 2, Copper Sunrise (A. Prakash) 3 and The Sense (Abhay S) 4. 2-3/4, 1 and 4-3/4. Im 16.10s. ₹82 (w), 20, 15 and 19 (p), SHP: 41, THP: 43, FP: 574, Q: 292, Trinella: 2,885 and 989, Exacta: 61,268 and 13,128. Favourite: Chisox. Owner: Mr. Dinesh Kumar K. Trainer: Sharat Kumar.

7. RICHELIEU PLATE (Div. I), (1,400m), rated 20 to 45, 4-y-o & over: **PRINCE ABIR** (Suraj) 1, Muirfield (K. Nazif) 2, Casey (Darshan) 3 and Aherne (S. Shareef) 4. 3, 3 and 1-1/4. Im28.93s. ₹24 (w), 12, 15 and 53 (p), SHP: 41, THP: 137, FP: 104, Q: 67, Trinella: 1,247 and 633, Exacta: 6,823 and 2,924. Favourite: Prince Abir. Owner: M/S. DT. Racing & Breeding LLP & Mr. Mukul A. Sonawala. Trainer: S. Attaollahi.

Jackpot: ₹46,006 (two tkts); Runner up: 13,144 (three tkts); Treble (i): 709 (12 tkts); (ii): 1,532 (13 tkts).

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Fifth T20I ticket sales on June 12

Sale of tickets for the fifth T20I between India and South Africa scheduled to be held in Bengaluru (June 19, Sunday) will be on June 12, 10 a.m. onwards.

Tickets can be bought at the stadium for denominations ₹750 (Gate No. 5, Cubbon Road), ₹2000 (Gate No. 2, Cubbon Road), ₹4000 (Gate No. 19, Queens Road), ₹5000 and ₹6000 (both Gate No. 18, Queens Road). Online sales via PAYTM will be for tickets priced upward of ₹6000, up to 20,000. Tickets unsold via the box office at the stadium on June 12 will be put up for sale online.

Drishya hits ton

Drishya top-scored with 123 as Six Cricket Academy (green) thumped SOC by 110 runs in the Tiger Cup under-16 cricket tournament, here on Sunday.

The scores: EISB 276/5 in 30 overs (Arnavv Sharma 112, Aadarsh Subramanian 54, S. Yash 29, Aryan N 33) bt Eagle CC 202/3 in 30 overs (Mohammed Ali 67, Puneeth 79).

SJBHSA 159/3 in 29 overs (Vivian Martis 77) lost to Young Lions 160/4 in 28 overs (Aadesh Urs 44, Rohit 43, Rakshan 27).

Six CA (green) 243/3 in 30 overs (Drishya 123, Manik Raj 76) bt SOC 133/4 in 30 overs (K.A. Saket 34, Soham 32).

Just CA 264/2 in 22 overs (R. Shishir 121, Siddarth Akhil 44, Aditya 59) bt Kapil CC 94 in 22 overs (H.G. Nischith 32, Adarsh Dash 4/17).

Hat-trick by Konan

Fazal Zafa Konan scored a hat-trick as Rebels FC beat Bangalore Gunners FC 3-0 in the BDFA A-division football league championship on Sunday.

The results: Rebels FC 3 (Fazal Zafa Konan 38, 43, 61) bt Bangalore Gunners FC 0; Friends United FC 4 (Rony C.Lalenkina 26, Dhanush Kumar 32, Pradeep Kumar 54, Jones Muthuraj 90+3) bt RWF FC 1 (Ramesh 39); BTM FC 2 (Narendra Choudhary 18, 23) bt Income Tax FC 0.

Argentina star Tevez calls it quits

FOOTBALL

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BUENOS AIRES

Former Argentina forward Carlos Tevez, who has been without a club for the past year, announced his retirement from the game on Saturday.

Tevez played 76 times for Argentina, including at two World Cups, and was a part of the gold-medal winning team at the 2004 Athens Olympics.

At club level, he started and ended his career with Boca Juniors, winning the Copa Libertadores in 2003.

In 2006 he joined West Ham but his transfer to Manchester United a year later became mired in the 'third-party ownership' dispute which was to prompt changes to both Premier League and FIFA regulations with regard to player contracts.

Tevez... goodbye. •AFP

Tevez was marked by the death of his adoptive father, Segundo Tevez, from COVID-19 in February 2021 and stepped away from Boca in June that year.

"I stopped playing because I lost my number one fan and I lost the desire," he said.

Brazil doesn't need Neymar magic to win: Tite

Says a new generation of players are ready to share the load

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

Brazil no longer relies on superstar Neymar to win games, manager Tite said on Sunday, with an Olympic gold medal-winning generation looking to step up at the World Cup.

Neymar underlined his importance to Tite's side by netting the 72nd and 73rd goals of his Brazil career in a 5-1 friendly thrashing of South Korea in Seoul last week.

That took him within striking distance of the legendary Pele's record of 77 goals for the five-time World Cup winners.

Tite played down Brazil's dependence on Neymar as his team prepared to face Japan in a friendly in Tokyo on Monday, saying a new generation of players are ready to share the load.

"I have been in charge of the national team for a long time, and in that time I have made lots of mistakes and also made some good decisions," he said. "We have a new generation coming through and one good thing I have done is to try out a lot of players."

Aman clinches gold medal

SPORTS BUREAU

Aman won the gold medal in the men's freestyle 57kg category in the Bolat Turylkhanov second ranking series wrestling tournament in Almaty on Sunday.

In a field of five wrestlers, Aman beat all his opponents to top the chart and take the honours.

Olympics bronze medallist Bajrang Punia (65kg) lost to Uzbek Abbos Rakhmonov 5-3 in the quarterfinals.

He, however, defeated, Kazakh Rifat Saibotalov 7-0 in the bronze medal match to ensure a podium finish.

Deepak withdraws

Olympian Deepak Punia (92kg) withdrew from his bouts due to an injury.

Vishal Kaliraman (70kg) and Naveen (74kg) lost their respective bronze medal matches.